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HISTORY

OF

DECKERTOWN

N.J.

Which includes a history of the Crigar,  
Titsworth, and Decker families to some extent.

By

Charles E. Stickney

Deckertown, N.J. 1895





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CHAS. E. STICKNEY.

PUBLISHER AND PROPRIETOR

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## A HISTORY OF DECKERTOWN.

Which Includes a history of the Crigar, Titsworth, and Decker Families to Some Extent.

[BY CHARLES E. STICKNEY.]

CHAPTER I.

BRINGING THE MATERIAL FOR OUR BUILDING ON THE GROUND.

In beginning to write a history of our town, or borough to be more precise, it may be well for us to state that the mention made in it of the Crigar, Titsworth and Decker families seems to us very necessary. To write of Decker-


town without doing so would be analogous to writing a history of Rome without any Romans in it. To write of the families above named with some degree of knowledge has cost a considerable amount of research, which we never expect to get pay for, unless some just writer, to follow us, may kindly mention our researches while profiting by our labors. "Rome was not built in a day," neither was Deckertown. The preparation for the building of the latter was commenced when the Dutch West India Company sent colonists to people the New Netherlands, away back in the seventeenth century. At that time the Waranawokong Indians, who dwelt along the borders of the Walkill, here had some boundaries, which separated their tribe from the Shawneese tribe which occupied the valley of the Papakating, and the country extending across the Delaware river to where Bethlehem, Pa., now stands. The division line was drawn somewhere in the vicinity of Deckertown. The Shawneese are understood to have been allies of the Delaware tribe, more properly a subdivision of that tribe, the headquarters of which were in Minisink valley, which was inhabited by the Minsi tribe, another subdivision of the great Delaware clan. The Minisink valley was the part of territory on both sides the Delaware river in the valley extending from the Water Gap to where Port Jervis now stands. The word Minsi, has no relation to that of Minisink, the latter having reference to the formation of the land, while the former was simply the Indian name for a wolf. The Indians in pronouncing the word gave it a somewhat broad pronunciation, wherefrom, in old documents they were frequently called Munsey Indians, or Muncies. Their totem, or tribal emblem, was the picture of a wolf which all other Indians knew by sight, for many hundred miles about, as their signature. The totem, or emblem of the Shawneese was the picture of a bear. Whenever parties or warriors passed through the forest, if they wished

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to convey tidings to others, they scraped off a smooth place upon the bark of a tree, and with a piece of coal sketched a figure of a bear, or a wolf, according to which tribe they belonged. Its different attitudes and accompanying marks conveyed the news of which direction they were going and whether for hunting, peace, or war. The Shawneese and Minsi tribes spoke one language, called the Mingo tongue, and John Pomphiro, and Calvin, early interpreters between them and the whites, have left evidences of their speeches at the different treaty councils held at Burlington, Easton, and elsewhere between New Jersey officials and the Indians.

The close alliance that exists between the two tribes has never been more clearly established than by the researches of Dr. E. S. Dalrymple, of Branchville. Only a little over a year ago he exhumed the skeleton of a little Indian maiden, (or it may be a male) from the vast fields of Indian dead which are buried on the Minisink flats. Among the trinkets, which loving friends had buried with her probably 200 years ago, he found a wooden comb. It had very likely been fashioned after a pattern of women's back hair combs seen among the early settlers. Upon its top was the carved figure of a bear rising on its fore feet in a watchful attitude. This emblem to our mind conveys a whole volume of history. It shows us the friendly relations that existed between the Shawneese and Minsics, and confirms traditions that the bodies of deceased personages of importance were conveyed often to a considerable distance for burial. The animated body to which this skeleton, belonged evidently was the child of a very important personage among the Shawneese. It may not have had a habitation near Deckertown, but from it we argue that many deceased Indians from this locality were probably taken for burial to their great shrine over the mountains, where were the main castles, cemeteries, and the council chamber of the Delaware's. This

council chamber, is known to the whites as Pow-wow-hill, and is on the level plateau near Milford, Pa. The council chamber of the other clan, or river Indians, was located just above Newburgh on a level plateau forming part of the shore of the Hudson River. It was called by the Dutch settlers the Dans-Kammer, and the legislature of New York State early passed a very stringent act forbidding the Indians to resort there. Without any records as to the location of tribal lines, we confess that natural formations of land have guided our judgment in assuming that the site of Deckertown was under Shawneese domination. Another reason we have for so assuming is because an Indian trail or path led, from where an Indian village stood on the present site of Hamburg, through Deckertown, where some mounds could once be seen, on the hill back of where Prof. Seely now lives, indicating the existence of an Indian village, thence up the Clove creek to Pakadasink (now Greenville) and through the gap in the mountains there to the Indian villages at Mackhackameck in upper Minisink.

Arent Schuyler passed over it in 1694. He was sent by the New York authorities to find out whether the French, who occupied Canada, had not been tampering with the Minsi Indians. He has left a diary of his journey and does not mention seeing a white person on the trip. This territory then was an unbroken wilderness. Can you imagine the solemnity of the strange silence that reigned above this very hill, and the swamps about it, when Schuyler followed the footpath indicated by blazed (marked) trees through the endless forests of their giant brethren that locked their hoary limbs over it?

But as we said before, preparations had been laid for the settlement of a village here, although the movers were ignorant themselves of it. One principal part of those preparations was the arrival of the progenitor of the Decker family in America. This may be viewed,

THE  
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In the night of preparatory material placed on the ground. We have not found the date of his arrival, but when King Charles II made a present of the principal part of North America to his brother, the Duke of York, in 1664, and had to send him a fleet of ships to put him in possession because the Dutch had a very cosy settlement on Manhattan Island, the progenitor aforesaid was here. The English squadron arrived in the Harbor of New York during the autumn of 1664. No war had been declared against Holland by the English and Governor Stuyvesant was ruling the New Netherlands at his undisturbed pleasure in New Amsterdam, when he was rudely awakened by the sight of those English men-of-war riding abreast the Battery. He at once wrote a letter to the commandant of them, and designated four messengers to take it to him to find out what he wanted. Richard Nicholls, the acting commandant of the English forces, returned answer that he wanted all the Dutch possessions surrendered to his Majesty without delay. Stuyvesant undertook to "bluff" a little as it might be termed, and boldly declared that "they feared nothing but what God should lay on them." At this the English squadron made preparations to attack the city. When their guns were got in position for attack, the sight of their movements induced the vallant Stuyversant to write another letter, dated Sept., 4th (now Style) 1664; and he called to his aid four of the best men of New Amsterdam to convey the letter to Nicholls. In it he said (Smith's History of New Jersey) "however that in regard that we make no doubt, that upon your assault and our defense, there will be a great deal of blood spilt: and besides, it is to be feared greater difficulty may arise hereafter; we thought fit to send unto you, Mr. JOHN DE DECKER, Counselor of State; Cornelius VanRiven, Secretary and Receiver; Cornelius Steenwick, Mayor; and James Cousseca, Sheriff; to the end of finding

some means to hinder and prevent the spilling of innocent blood." Governor Stuyvesant evidently did not rely on his waving the bloody rag before the English officer for much consideration, for he had no means of defense. His main reliance we may justly assume was on the Counselor of State, John de Decker. That gentleman could not alter the English Commander's determination. He returned, and the end of the conference was that Gen. Nicholls named six persons, and Governor Stuyvesant named six persons, who met and agreed upon the surrender of the Dutch possessions in America to the English Aug. 27th (old style) 1671. One of the commissioners appointed by the Governor, and who assisted in arranging the terms of the treaty, was John de Decker.

He was no doubt the same Herr de Decker, mentioned by Captain Martin Kraeger in his Journal of the second Esopus war. The Indians attacked Wiltwyck (now Kingston, N. Y.) in 1663, carried off a number of prisoners besides killing several of the inhabitants and burning their houses. Capt. Thomas Chambers was nominally in command of the militia at that place but upon news of the attack being received in New Amsterdam, Governor Stuyvesant sent Capt. Martin Kraeger to their assistance. The Captain has left a very clear account of what took place (see documentary History of New York) and, among other things, the joy which the inhabitants manifested when Herr De Decker arrived at Esopus with a supply of stores and reinforcements. Now here occurs a halt. After the surrender of the Dutch provinces to the English in the following year, as we have stated, we have been unable to trace the movements of John De Decker. But it has been ascertained that the family of that name in Sussex County all came from a progenitor who settled at Esopus, it is very probable that this John may have gone there after the English took possession, and made a permanent settlement.





He was of an illustrious family in Amsterdam, Holland. A relative, presumably a brother's son from their comparative ages, became quite famous in England as a writer. He was born toward the latter part of the seventeenth century in Amsterdam, and was given a good education. In 1702 he went to London, and became naturalized as a British subject in 1703. He embarked in commerce and made a fortune for those times in about ten years. He was made a Baronet in 1716. In 1719 he was elected a member of Parliament for Bishop's Castle, in which capacity he served four years. In 1713 he published a pamphlet which went through seven editions and was a great success. In it he advocated the idea of raising all revenues for the government by a single tax—a tax upon houses. According to his tables there were then, in England 1,200,000 houses—allowing one half to be exempted for dwellings for workingmen, he showed that the tax would raise 26,000,000 annually, which far exceeded the actual need. He died March 18th 1749, and as he had no sons, his daughters succeeded to his estate.

[Errata. The year 1674 in last chapter should be 1664.]

## CHAPTER II.

### GOOD OLD MARTIN KRAEGER AND HOW THE DECKER FAMILY CAME TO SETTLE IN MINISINK.

The illustrious originator of the single tax, (or house tax) mentioned in chapter one, was Mathew Decker. His grandfather and John De Decker's father are believed to have been Abraham De Decker, Jr., who is mentioned (Holland Desc. Col. Hist. N. Y. vol. I, p. 480) as being Accountant General of the West India Company, in 1652 at Amsterdam.

The house tax was given a trial by the United States in President Adams' time, but it was such a departure from old regulations that the people rebelled against it. George Labar, who lived near the Water Gap in Pennsylvania, in

1798, when the tax was attempted to be collected, said: "The excitement in Mt. Bethel exceeded that of the whiskey rebellion. The people took it as they had taken the British duty on tea as an imposition and wrong. The assessors were threatened with personal violence. Men armed themselves to resist the hated law. In upper Minisink the officers did not attempt to collect the tax. John Fries made himself conspicuous as a leader of insurgents. But the difficulty was at last crushed. Fries was arrested for treason, found guilty, and sentenced to be hung, but was afterwards pardoned by President Adams." Mr. Labar said that at that time he was living with his father-in-law, and their house having two windows was assessed \$1 tax.

Of Martin Kraeger, who has left on record an account of Herr Decker's visit to Esopus, we may as well mention that his name is now spelled in plain English, Crigar. He was a Hollander—one of the roving, jovial sort, who seems to have been fitted to almost any station and equally contented anywhere. He came early to New Amsterdam and purchased a lot just northeast of what we now call the Battery. He built upon the lot and began keeping hotel. It was what about every other man did who came to America in those times. His way of managing it made it one of the favorites of the new town. When the incipient city was organized Martin Kraeger was elected the first Burgomaster. His example of good living, has caused the alderman in New York city who have succeeded him even unto our day to be famous for good dinners and rotundity. He owned a sloop, and from that circumstance was called Captain. In 1656 he was commissioned regularly, Captain of a company of soldiers sent from the city of Amsterdam to the New Netherlands. A copy of his commission lies before us dated Dec. 5th 1656. It was in command of this company that he repaired to Esopus, as we have mentioned, in 1663. In the Ar-





thives of New Jersey he is spoken of as being in the Raritan river with his sloop a few years later. Here we have to leave him, as we have no record of his death. Three brothers, Johann, Andries, Johann Peter, Johann Krieger, came to Philadelphia, Nov. 20th, 1741, and reared families. Andries Krieger, of Morris County who died in 1770, left a family of four boys and three girls. There was also a Conrad and Christian Cregar, of Hunterdon County. The latter had three children says, Chambers, when he made his will in 1760, Peter, William and Catherine. His will was probated Dec. 3d, of the same year. William Cregar came to Wantage about the close of the Revolutionary war, and kept tavern just northwest of Beemerville. The road which led over the mountain from his house, is yet called the Cregar road. Henry F. Simonson owns the old homestead, and if we mistake not he or his wife are descendants of William Cregar. We do not doubt that the family by tracing their family histories can establish the line of descent from 'gal-lant Captain Krieger, but we cannot attempt it now.

Some readers may think by our mention of Captain Krieger, that we have lost our way while writing of Decker-town, and we admit that it properly may be called at least a digression, but the captain is destined to be such a historical figure in the annals of New York that we couldn't help mentioning his claims. To go back to the thread of our history, we are told that in 1664 there lived in Esopus (Kingston) one Gerritson, who had emigrated thither from Heerden in Holland. He married Grietjen Hendricks Westercamp in New York (then New Amsterdam) in March 1664. She was said to be a resident of Esopus, and why they went to New York to get married it will now probably never appear. The records may show they did so. They are said to be the ancestors of the principal branch of

the Decker family in this country. What relationship they held to Herr Decker, or John De Decker does not appear. Indeed we are not certain that the name Gerritson is always interpreted "Decker." June 6th 1685 they received a deed for 222 acres of land at Mombaccus in Ulster County, N. Y., and in 1705 they gave a plot of land to Rochester in that county, for a town house. Was he John DeDecker?

Hendrick Decker is claimed to have been their son. December 18th, 1686, he was married in Esopus (Kingston) to Antje Quick, and their place of residence was given as Mombaccus. It appears that Mombaccus was the Dutch, and Rochester the English name for the same village. Their daughter, Femetje, who by Mr. Nearpass' translation of church records is found to have been baptised October 29th, 1689, married Pieter Kuykendall July 8th 1719. Mr. Kuykendall was a resident of upper Minisink at the time, and the farm upon which he settled and began housekeeping is now occupied mostly by Fort Jervis. After mentioning the other children of Hendrick and Antje, we shall endeavor to trace the descendants of each one to some of the Sussex families of that name. Their eldest son, Hendrick, Jr., married Hanna Tietsoort, who was born in upper Minisink. Thomas, baptised Sept. 3rd, 1701 married Jenneke Van Nimwegen, daughter of Gerardus Van Nimwegen. Johannes, baptised March 9th, 1712, married Elizabeth DeWitt for his first wife, and Deborah Van Fleet for his second wife. Margaret the youngest daughter married Hendrick Hendricksen Kortrecht. There was a daughter Tjertje, of whom we have no farther account.

Of Pieter Kuykendall who married Femetje, he was the son of Leur Jacobsen Van Kuykendall, born in the city of New York in 1659 and who resided at Kingston. They had eight children. Hendrick baptised July 10th, 1729, who married Oct. 21st 1746 Elizabeth Cool



dians, and got them to give him a deed in writing. This they did June 31, 1700. In 1702 Queen Anne by the celebrated Minisink patent, conveyed all the lands from the lower end of Big Minisink Island northeast in New Jersey to certain parties. For some dozen years matters remained in peace except that it became a mooted question whether the men who held the Minisink Patent could eject the settlers who had previous titles. In 1713 Tietsoord sold his farm to "John Decker who with his cousin, Young Jan, was to occupy one of the parcels and his brother Hendrick the other," as he states in his affidavit. The purchase of this land was probably what induced this branch of the Decker family to settle from Esopus in Minisink, although it appears from Mr. Nearpass' translation of the church records that some of them had before given Minisink as their place of residence. Shortly after settling upon their new purchase Mathew Ling one of the Minisink Patent proprietors brought suit to get possession of the farm under the authority of that grant. Tietsoord had removed to Dutchess Co., N. Y., hence his affidavit was taken there in 1717 as we have noticed. The farm lies in a bend (arm) it is called in the Indian deed) of the Neversink river near Port Jervis, and part of it is in the lands now owned by the heirs of Simon Westfall. We have no proof that Mr. Tietsoord (now Titsworth) ever returned from Dutchess county. In order to trace the family line, before we take up the regular thread of the history of the Decker family we shall digress a little to a short genealogy of the Titsworth family. The suit brought by the Minisink Patentees was lost, and the original titles were held to be valid.

### CHAPTER III.

#### HOW THE SETTLEMENT OF WILLIAM TITSWORTH, IN THE WILDERNESS, LED TO THE PEOPLING OF, AND HAS MADE THE VALLEYS ABOUT PORT JERVIS AND DECKERTOWN TO "BLOSSOM LIKE THE ROSE."

It appears also that there was a Stephanus Tietsoort, born in Schenectady, who must have emigrated from there about the same time that the William before mentioned did. That he also came to Minisink is known. He married Sara Hoornbeck (Hornbeck) of Rochester, Ulster Co., N. Y., Oct. 18th, 1702 in Kingston. It was not a second marriage, consequently we may conclude him to be about 20 years of age at that time, and that he was about 7 years of age when he left Schenectady. The comparison of ages and circumstances, induces the belief that he was William's son. William had married Nieltje Swart, and two of their children are on record as baptised at Kingston, Hanna, June 7th, 1695, and Maryetje Nieltje Swart, May 7th 1699. Hence we may reasonably conclude that when William settled in the wilderness to do blacksmithing for the Minsi Indians, he took his family with him. They were undoubtedly the first white people who settled in the Minisink valley. When Gumzer and Codebeck, came there looking for a location, the peaceable establishment of Titsworth among the Indians helped the selection of a tract just north of his. Now Stephanus after his marriage in 1702, came to Minisink to begin housekeeping. It was but natural that he should set up an establishment for himself. In doing so there is every reason for us to believe that he came over the mountain and made a settlement in the fertile Clove valley, very likely on the east bank of Clove creek opposite the present residence of William Tits-



96 years, 4 months, 23 days. An inventory of Stephen's property was made by John Muldaugh and Benjamin Kuykendall appraisers June 20th, 1777. In it appear 8 milch cows @ £110s—£86; 2 three-year-olds £8; 5 two-year-olds, £12; one horse, two mares, one colt, £52; Plantation, £100; one wagon, £5; woolen wheel and little wheel and sundries, £16s. Upon the inventory is the following endorsement made apparently by Henry Titsworth.

"Henry Tietsort was married in the year 1784. In a will which he left me, and I kept my grandfather, William Tietsort, till he died, out of the estate. He died on the 4th day of March, 1791, which he left me £20 per year for his clothing and board."

When the speculators and land sharps began to look after Wantage lands, by virtue of authority from the Jersey proprietors, which they did largely between 1750 and 1765, they found the cabins of settlers scattered here and there among the hills and valleys. Land was of such little value that they wisely concluded not to disturb those squatters or settlers, and consequently, when the latter asked it, the surveyors surveyed out their tracts and they secured titles by paying for the expenses. The researches of my friend, Surveyor James W. McCoy, have established the fact, that when Sharp made his surveys about Deckertown in 1751 he kept to the valley south of the clearings of the few inhabitants then here, either because he did not value the hills, or did not wish to encroach on previous claims. One deed now in the possession of William Titsworth, great great grandson, of the first Clove settler recites: "This Indenture made the 15th day of May in the year of our Lord 1761 between Thomas Bartow of Perth-Amboy in the Province of New Jersey, of the one part, and Stephen Tietsort of the County of Sussex, Jr., Yeoman, of the other part, witnesseth," etc., conveys for £36 10s, fifty two acres and two tenths of an acre,

being part of 1000 acres sold to said Bartow by Mary Alexander April 1st, 1760. The survey is on a separate sheet of paper and begins "all that tract of land in said county lying on the west branch of the Walkkill called the Deep Clove creek, beginning at a white oak tree standing on the west side of the kill." Another deed from Lord Sterling (rec. at Perth Amboy, book S. C. page 334 etc.) conveys to Stephen ten acres more. Lord Sterling is believed to have been the husband of Mary Alexander.

Since Henry Tietsort's death, the family name has been known as Titsworth.

The eldest son of Stephen and Catherine Titsworth, William, married Margaret Middaugh. One of their sons, John, became a physician of prominence and died on the old homestead Feb. 1st, 1873. His second son, William now (1895) owns it. Wallace and Alfred Titsworth, thrifty farmers of the Clove are also lineal descendants of the first Clove William.

There is also on record one Ariantje Tietsort who married Jacob Van Kuykendall about 1706. They removed to Sandyston N. J., probably about that time. Her husband and his brother Matthews, or Matthew, were very early settlers at Big Minisink Island. Their names appear as land owners there, when a village plot was surveyed for Minisink village in 1725. Ariantje was probably a daughter of "Abram", of Kingston, and we may reasonably conclude that the settlement of her husband and his brother in lower Minisink was brought about by the visits made to her relative, the humble blacksmith, who was sharpening tools and making axes and hoes perhaps, for the Indians in the lonely Mackhackameck wilderness. She probably died between 1706 and 1711, for her husband married Sara Westfall 1712. It has already been shown that by the marriage of Hendrick Decker, 1st to Hanna Tietsort, the first white child born in the vicinity of Port Jervis, the



probability is strong that the Decker family were induced to settle there. It also appears that the Westbrooks had become relatives by marriage to the Deckers by the marriage of Johannis Westbrook to Magdalena Decker at Kingston in 1687, and through that relationship it is very probable that the Westbrook family became familiar with the Minisink country, from the blacksmith's residence there, and finally settled in lower Minisink. Jacobus Rosenkrans, it is known married Sara Decker, who was a sister of Johannis Decker, and so perhaps was influenced to a settlement in lower Minisink by the relationship. The Westphaels or Westfalls were early related by marriage to the foregoing families, and thus it is plausible that they became acquainted with and settled in lower Minisink. Their first settlement on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware, must have been within a very few years after the blacksmith, William Titsworth settled on the Neversink. Thus we think to his settlement there, may be attributed the location of the Kuykendalls, Westbrooks Westfalls, Rosenkrans, Kortrights, Coles, and Deckers in that neighborhood. Perhaps Guemar, Cuddeback, and the Swartwonts, were largely influenced to settle there through his instrumentality.

The intermarriage of the Westbrooks, with the Decker family is shown by the entry on Kingston church records of the baptism of Anthony Westbrook, April 17 1692, wherein his parentage is given as, his father, Johannis of Albany, and his mother Magdalena Decker, daughter of Jan Broerson Decker, and Heiltje Jacobs, of Kingston. John B. Decker's identity is here clearly established. He may or may not have been a son of John D. Decker mentioned in our first chapter, but our readers will notice throughout several generations of the family that have existed in this country that "John", "John B." or "John D." have never been omitted from the family nomenclature. It is very rare that any

family, of much size, among their descendants, have omitted the prefix "John" at least to one or more of the male members. Thus that title can be claimed, we confidently think to have descended in an unbroken line from the first John De Decker, Counselor of State under Peter Stuyvesant to the present generation.

It will be remembered that William Tietsort in his affidavit stated the circumstances of his selling his Mackhackameck land to "Johannis Decker, who with his cousin, young Jan" was to occupy it in 1713. This Johannis (John) Decker was of Kingston' and most probably a father of the Magdalena above mentioned. The young John alluded to by Titsworth was the son of Hendrick and Antje Quick, and was born March 9 1712. Some descendants claim him as a son of Martinus Decker, of Deckertown. John, the elder, did not live long after the purchase of Titsworth's land, we assume because the records show that Helecca, his widow, purchased a tract of land adjoining that of Titsworth's from Joseph Kirkbride and Sarah Stevenson in 1726. This was the land upon which Peter Coykendall and Femmetje Decker, his wife, settled and finally owned. It covers the site of Port Jervis. It remained in the Coykendall family until 1840 (Nearpass) when Jacob Coykendall sold it and went to Cayuga Co., New York.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### MAJOR JOHN DECKER.

We strongly suspect that Heleca, or Holeca as it is sometimes spelled, widow of John Decker named in the old Kirkbride and Stephenson deed, is the same Helletje Jacobs mentioned in our last chapter. Her husband dying before 1726 he must therefore have been well along in years, when he bought the Tietsort farm. There was a Johannis Decker born at Kingston April 16th, 1741, who we conclude to have been a







nephew of the **Johannis Decker of Mack-luckameek**. **Johannis**, born in 1741, married **Annatje Hasbrouck**, of Marbletown, Ulster Co., N. Y. She was born Dec. 29th, 1747. They came to Walden, Orange Co., N. Y., very early and he built or purchased a mill there in 1768. Their children were **Jacob**, **Cornelius**, **John**, **Rachel**, **Ann**, **Jonah**, **Elsie** and **Mathew**. Of them **Cornelius**, born in 1770 married **Miss Hannah Duryea**. He died in 1835. Their children were **George**, **Joseph H.**, **John**, **Ann**, **Hannah M.**, **Rachel**, **Caroline**, **Dolly**, and **Cornelius, Jr.** Of them **Joseph H.**, was for a long time a highly respected citizen of the town of **Montgomery**, where his son, **Francis C.**, now resides if we mistake not. Very many descendants of this branch of the family, are in the northern and eastern part of **Orange County**.

**Daniel Decker** who married **Blandina Vredenburg**, Dec. 4th, 1766, as mentioned in our first chapter, was married by **Anthony Van Etten**, Justice of the Peace. **Anthony** had married **Daniel's** sister, **Hannah**, and at that time was his brother-in-law. **Daniel** and **Blandina** settled on a part of the **Schoonmaker** and **Brink** tract in **South Minisink** by the **Delaware river**, which had been located by **Kirkbrides** survey in 1718. **Daniel** established a ferry, one of the first across the river there, which was called **Decker's Ferry** for many years after his death. He died **March 1st, 1833**, and his widow **Nov. 22d, 1835** and they were buried in a family plot on his farm. They had seven children, **Henry**, **Thomas**, **Aaron**, **John**, **Hannah**, **Sarah** and **Jane**. The two last married and went west. **Henry** married **Margery Westbrook**. He was a soldier of the war of 1812. They had eight children, **Daniel**, **Andrew D.**, **John**, **Abraham**, **Eljab**, **Mary**, **Salache**, and **Blandina**. **Thomas**, the next son, born **Nov. 25th, 1775**, married **Susanna Shoemaker** and had eight children, **Henry S.**, **Daniel D.**, **Samuel**, **Peggy**, **Maria**, **Sarah A.**, **Calvin** and **Blandina**. **Aaron**, married **Jane**

**Brokaw**, and had six children, **John A.**, **Caleb**, **Abraham**, **George W.**, **Danuel** and **Amanda**. The latter married a **Mr. Kintner** who lived at **Stillwater**. **John**, **Daniel's** fourth son, born **April, 24th, 1780**, married **María Brokaw**. Their children were **Peter**, **Abraham**, **Aaron**, **Sarah**, **Salache** and **Jane**. **Hannah**, **Daniel's** eldest daughter married **John Depue** of **Pahaquarry**. Their children were **Moses**, **Daniel**, **Nicholas** and **John**. The descendants of the foregoing families it will be seen must occupy an important part of the human family throughout the **Delaware Valley**, **Pennsylvania** and **Southern Jersey**.

**Margaret Decker**, mentioned in our first chapter, who married **Hendrick Hendrickson Kortright**, is stated by **Mr. Nearpass** to have owned the farm near **Port Jervis**, occupied in 1893 by **Aaron Whitlock**.

**Johannis Decker**, son of **Hendrick Decker, Jr.**, and his wife **Hannah Tiet-sort**, mentioned in our first chapter was the "Young Jan" spoken of by **William Tiet-sort** in his affidavit, who with his brother **Hendrick** was to occupy the farm sold them by **Tiet-sort** jointly. He married for his first wife, **Elizabeth**, daughter of **Jacob Dewitt**, who was a son of **T. Jerck Classen DeWitt**, of **Kingston**, by whom had three sons, **Martin**, **John** and **Richard**. She dying he married for his second wife, **Deborah Van Fleet**, daughter of **John Van Fleet** and **Jesyntje Swartwout**, who owned, **Mr. Nearpass** says, the present **Solomon Van Fleet** farm near **Port Jervis**; by whom he had sons, **Levi** baptised **Feb. 12th, 1753**, **Isaiah** and **Isaac**; and daughters, **Margery** baptised **Aug. 31st, 1768**, who married **Peter Gumaer, Jr.**, **Elizabeth** baptised **June 18th, 1760**, who married **Van Etten**, and **Calletje**, baptised **Jan. 8th, 1772**. In about 1857 **Peter Gumaer** wrote the following incident concerning **John Decker**: "It is now a few years over a century (meaning about 1758) since the fall of the deepest snow ever known in this part of the country."



Before it fell Pieter Kuykendal and his wife went to Esopus and left their children home where John Decker and his wife were to go daily and see to them and render such assistance as would be necessary. Two or three days after they started this snow fell, and the morning after its falling John Decker commenced to shovel and make a foot-path through the snow to Kuykendal's house. He worked all that day and the greater part of the next day before he got to it and found the door shut, so that the children could not get out of the house. The door opened to the outside and the snow laid so deep against it that it could not be opened until the snow was removed. No victuals had been provided on the previous day to serve them for the next. They contrived to get some meal and mix it up with water, baked some of it on the hearth before the fire and lived on it till they were otherwise provided for."

Mr. Decker was collector of Minisink precinct in 1739, and collected the taxes of the Titsworths then living in the Clove near Deckertown as we have seen, for building the jail at Goshen, N. Y., as he did of all the people living in what is now Montague township, N. J., which was then considered a part of Orange Co., N. Y. His tax warrant has been preserved, and his return thereto. He was Ensign of a company of militia in Orange Co., at the same time. Hendrick J. Courtright was captain of the company. He became an elder in the Mackhackameck church in 1747. In 1748 he was made constable. In 1778 he was a Major of the militia. His commission as such was issued Feb. 28th, 1776 and made him "second Major of the Goshen Reg. of militia, of foot in Orange Co., of which Wm. Allison is Colonel." In 1778, when Brant invaded Minisink tradition says, that chieftain went into Major Decker's house unawares, and captured two negro boys. In 1779, when Brant again swooped down upon the settlements, tradition alleges that one of his objects was to get the scalp of

Maj. Decker, for which the British had offered a reward. The Major's house was of logs surrounded by "wooden fortifications." On the 20th day of July when the Indians came, Mrs. Decker was washing, assisted by a colored woman, at a spring near the house. Mr. Decker had gone to attend a funeral at Abram Swartwout's. The children were at school. The Indians surrounded the house. There were white men with them. One of the Tories built a fire on the floor of the house and said they would burn it. Mrs. Decker threw a pail of water on the fire and extinguished it. He told her if she did that again they would kill her. She then ran out of the house and fled across the fields towards another house. Brant sent an Indian after her, who brought her back, and Brant told her he wanted her to see her husband's residence burn down and she should not be harmed. She asked him if she could save anything. He answered: "yes, anything you can." She rushed in and saved the beds and bedding, and Brant directed two young Indians to assist her in carrying them to a safe place. Major Decker was returning from the funeral when he saw the smoke of his burning house. He was on horseback and rode very fast being alarmed. Just between where Abraham Swartwout and Solomon Van Fleet now live (or did live a few years ago when Dr. Solomon Van Etten gave these particulars for publication) he was met by a party of Indians. He dashed through the party, but none of them fired upon him, all of them seeming to be looking back of him. His horse became unmanageable, and ran into a tree-top which had fallen across the road, and got fast, so that the Major could not get him out. The Indians fired upon him and he was wounded in the thigh and abdomen. He then left the horse and fled up the rocks and hid in a cave east of Carpenter's Point, where the Erie R. R. tracks now are. The Indians pursued him, but did not find him. When it got dark he traveled over the moun-



### tain to Finchville.

His daughter Margaret, then eleven years old with her brother, was attending school. The Indians came to the school house. Margaret's account of what followed is the same as that given by Mrs. Van Auken, who was a pupil there at the time, and all the stories told by the other children. It is therefore an undoubted part of history. The Indians took the teacher, Jeremiah Van Auken, into the woods, killed, and scalped him. While they were doing so, the girls and boys huddled together, frightened at the awful scene. A tall Indian came up to them and dashed a blot of black paint on the girl's aprons, telling them to show that to the other Indians and they would not be hurt. When the other Indians came back the girls held up their aprons in front of the boys and themselves. The Indians looked at them but said nothing and passed on and left them. Their deliverer was no other than the great chief-tain Brant. His act stands out upon the page of history as a magnanimous one.

His race was being exterminated by the whites, and the latter were never known to spare an Indian woman or child when triumphant in battle. When the Indians started to leave them, Margaret's brother ran. He had his books under his arm, and one of the Indians ran after him. He dropped his books and the Indian then stopped. When he found he was not pursued he went more slowly. Tradition says that he found an infant, which had been dropped by its mother in her flight, and rescued it. Major Decker, when he arrived next morning at the house of a Mr. Green near Finchville in what is now the town of Mount Hope, Orange Co., N. Y., found his son there where he had arrived the day previous. The name of this lad was Benjamin, and his age is given in the History of Orange County at 16 years. He was at that estimate born about 1764, and his name does not appear upon the church baptismal records.

This lad's escape and flight over the mountain must have carried the first news of Brant's invasion to the people about Finchville from whence an express was dispatched to Goshen for assistance.

In the memoir of James Finch, who lived at Finchville at the time, it is stated that Mrs. Decker came there the next morning for protection, leading her small children by the hand, and carrying the family bible under her arm.

The only written memoir left by the Major, is an affidavit he made relative to the boundary line between New York and New Jersey, which Mr. Neapass furnished among other papers for the history of Orange County. It is as follows:

Orange County S. S: Johannes Decker being duly sworn deposes and saith that he was born at Rochester, is now seventy-one or seventy-two years of age, lived since he was a sucking child at Mohaghamake, he was well acquainted with the Indians and their language from a child—that he was well acquainted with the fishkill, so called by the Dutch people, and by the English people, Delaware, by the Indians Lamasepose—that is fishkill. That he has always understood from the Indians, young and old, that the left hand or west branch at Shohacan, carried up the name of Lamasepose to the head of it, and the reason why they gave deponent was because there was great numbers of Mushanamuck (bass) and Guwan (shad) went up that branch and but few or none went up the East branch. That he has also heard from Daniel Cole that he had been up the fishkill so far that he could jump over it with a walking stick and that he the deponent had understood that this was the West Branch. That this transaction was before the former trial at New York, and that Daniel Cole is now dead. That this deponent was well acquainted with the Indians, Ambepoes, Mastewap, Yamatabentics, Echkamare, and a number of





others that lived at Coshecton, Shokacon, and Cookhouse, but not much acquainted with the papekunk Indians because they were Esopns Indians.— That the Mougauk comes into the fish-kill about eight miles above Neversink and further saith not.

his  
Johannis X Decker  
mark

Sworn this 23rd day of  
Dec. 1785 before me

Soloman Coykendall, J. P."

The Major died in 1793 and divided his real estate among his children by will. In our next chapter we shall show how one of his descendants came to find his way to Deckertown after many years.

#### CHAPTER V.

BENJAMIN W., THE MAYOR, AND PETER  
THE FOUNDER.

The invasion of Minisink by Brant was followed by a battle between his forces and the settlers on the 22nd of July, 1779 at Lackawaxen. It was a disastrous engagement to the settlers as all our older readers have been taught by numerous works on local history and it is not our province in this work to go into its details. It only has to do with our present work, so far as its results concern the persons we are writing of. The defeat of the whites in that battle was so overwhelming that a fear seized upon the near by inhabitants of the Delaware Valley such as we cannot now realize. Whole families fled over the mountains into the more thickly settled parts of Orange County, and many members of those families never returned to their former dwelling places. It was forty years before any organized attempt was made to collect the bones of those of our kindred ancestry who were slain in that battle. Tradition has it that Major Decker's sons, Levi, Isaiah, Isaac and Benjamin ultimately took up their residence east of the Shawangunk mountains but the exact period of their doing so is unknown to us. It was very probably at the close of the Revolutionary

struggle. We find that Isaiah was roadmaster in Road District No. 8 in the town of Minisink in 1789. At that time the town of Minisink comprised nearly all that part of Orange Co., N. Y., now included in the towns of Greenville and Wawayanda besides the present territory in the old town. We, by tradition only, ascribe as his descendants, the families in and near Westtown. We find Isaac Decker located in 1790 as roadmaster of Road District No. 17, which it is quite clearly established was the Ridgeberry neighborhood. Braddock and Henry Decker were his descendants and of a later generation Jonathan Decker now a resident of Middletown. His son Benjamin now resides upon the old homestead which is on the road leading from Slate Hill to Ridgeberry.

As to Benjamin, the lad who fled from the school house, and brought the news of Brant's arrival in Minisink (Delaware) valley to Finchville, his movements have not been made clear. He married and and is reported to have settled in what is now the Middletown neighborhood. For some reason he left that locality with a family of small children and sought the higher latitudes of Sullivan County. Of the date of his death we are not informed. The children were Johnathan, Stephen, Isaac, Alfred, Jehiel, Jemima, Penelope and an older sister who married Wm. Parsons, of Middletown and resided there. Jemima married a Mr. Mapee, and Penelope married Chas. Boyd. The four sons, Stephen, Issaac, Alfred, Jehiel, if we mistake not, all settled in Sullivan County. One or more of them bought a farm and owned a considerable property on the East shore of Sackett Lake,, about three miles southwest from Monticello. Johnathan came to Wantage. To the best information we can obtain he had an uncle Joel. There is a Joel Decker buried in Fairview Cemetery, whom we do not think was the one in question, because his age was so nearly similar—he having been born in 1791, making him the same age as Johnathan. The Joel in Fair-





view died August 28, 1833. Johnathan was born Sept. 16, 1799., and was young when he came to Wantage. After some adventures he bought a farm near Woodburn with the savings of his industry.

He married Mahetablo Wells, born Oct. 16, 1739, and they resided during a long and useful life upon the Woodburn farm. There are some of the readers of this paper who will recall to memory the attendance of Johnathan and Mahetablo Decker at the old Beemer church, where they were sure to be seen at every service, unless something prevented. He died on the 10th day of Aug. 1876, and his remains were laid to rest in the beautiful new Beemerville Cemetery, where lay his loved helpmate, who had gone to her eternal home seven years before, she having died Dec. 7th, 1868.

Of their children one alone survives. At his birth July 4th, 1830 his parents were in poor circumstances. When he got older, he lived and worked for some time with his uncles in Sullivan Co. Then he attended school and clerked in a store at Beemerville. Then he married an accomplished young lady, Miss Elizabeth H. Potter, of Wantage and they began life at farming, living for some time on the farm in Wantage where Halsey Berry now resides. He then embarked in commercial life, and was in business in New York and Jersey City. Then they returned to the town of his choice - Deckertown, where they now reside. By this time you have recognized him; but nevertheless I will run the risk of being thought guilty of repetition and will say further that he is now Mayor of our beautiful town.

This brings us directly to the subject we have in hand, but it is at the very latest point in its history. To arrive at a proper beginning of that history we have now to go back to the days when the Indians were abandoning the hills and valleys about its present location. As they moved westward it was with unshakable feelings of regret. We none of us can know of the bitter feelings of

sorrow and despair which wrung their untutored minds, when they stood at a final parting on the Lill; and mountains which overlooked their loved valleys of the Papakating and Walkill, and bade them a silent farewell forever. Here the smoke of their wigwams had rose for unnumbered years. Here they had been reared, and had shared with their kindred in the joys of the chase, and games of their childhood. Here they had mourned with those that mourned, and witnessed the funeral obsequies of loved ones. All to be forsaken, and worse than that, to be yielded up to superior force. Ah, my readers, there must have been a bitter parting then. But even as they waved a last adieu to these enchanting lauds, the white man came on to take possession. His axe was heard at work upon the trees, even as the last fare-well of the Indian was given to the Great Spirit. There has always lingered a halo of romance about the friendship which the chief, Red Jacket, had for the trees of the forest. He looked upon every one of them as a friend and "every stroke of the axe" says his biographer thrust an iron into his soul. Thus it was in those times that a white man came through the forest axe in hand, perhaps a title too, and sought to locate a future home. His name was Peter Decker. His relatives had intermarried with the Tietzorts, as we have seen, for he was of the Esopus family of whom we have written. Therefore it was very probable that he was accompanied in his search by William or Stephanus Tietzert who had been residing since 1701 on the banks of the Clove stream near this place, and with whom he may be readily supposed to have been visiting while making the choice spoken of. He was a young man at the time, say, 18 years old, having been born in Ulster County in 1711, two years before his father, Johannes Decker and Helletje, or Holecce, his mother came to the old William Tietzort tract at Mackhackameck by the Neversink. We assume his visit to this



locality to have been made a year before his marriage, as would be natural in one contemplating that event, and desiring to prepare in a measure for it. This would place it at about 1729. But there are good grounds for supposing that he had spent some years perhaps, off and on with William and Stephanus Tietzort at their clove settlement, and had therefore time and again hunted over this neighborhood and was familiar with its advantages. He was a Hollander, and spoke the Dutch language, as did his friends and relatives, the Titsworths. This we know because Wallace and Alfred Titsworth remember the old burial ground of their family which was located on the east of the Clove road on the McMann farm, in which the tomb stones were all inscribed in Dutch.

As to Peter's appearance we shall submit proof later on which shows him to have been of large size, and of great strength when forty years old. At the time of his first visit here he was no doubt, correspondingly rugged and active. His dress then was very probably considerably Indian in its characteristics. All the early settlers wore buckskin trousers and moccasins, with perhaps a homespun coat and rough shirt, and a fur cap. That was probably as near as we can conjecture his appearance when he passed upon the site of Deckertown, and with an axe blazed a tree as the mark of his domain. Where was this spot? It is not probable the question can ever be positively determined. But it is well known that the early settlers in selecting a location always sought the neighborhood of a spring, where the purest of living water was always to be had in plenty, and it is well known that the Hollanders were very partial to low lands. It is quite certain then that Peter selected one of two places for a homestead, either the spot by the splendid spring of water which bubbled forth among the trees where J. J. Wickham's house now stands on Spring street, or by the spring which gushed from the declivity near where

the old farm house of the late Amos Munson now stands owned by Evi A. Willson on Hamburg avenue. It is very probable that the Amos Munson spring was the place because it fronted the Papakating meadows so nicely, and because that spring was the Indian's favorite. Their village, the ruins of which were once to be seen on the hill by where Prof. Seeley's house now stands, obtained its supply of water from this spring, naturally as most convenient. Surveyor James W. McCoy thinks that this was the place Peter selected, from the surveys which have been handed down. As a matter of fact his tract of land embraced all the land now included in Deckertown, as will appear later on. Having made his selection, he then undoubtedly awaited the time of his marriage before beginning a dwelling house. His marriage took place in Ulster County, as no record of it can be found in the records of the Minisink Valley, and the exact date cannot be found. His wife's maiden name was Leentje Osterhout. Her family resided in Kingston in 1695, we know because their residence is so given upon the church records there when Dirk Westbrook married his first wife Catharina Osterhout Aug. 25th, 1695. Edsall, in his Centennial address fixed the date of their coming to Deckertown at 1734, and Canouse in his Historical sermon, at 1740. But the first of their children to appear upon the baptismal records was in 1736, and there was probably one born before that as will hereafter appear. His marriage may with propriety be placed at or immediately before 1732, when he arrived at the age of 21 years. Then they very likely came the same year to settle upon their new homestead. As it was some distance to Mackhuckameck church, the child baptised in 1736, may have been anywheres from a few weeks to three or four years old.

It was the custom then for a new comer in a neighborhood to make a frolic, or "Bee," as it was called in build-a log house, and very possibly when



Petrus and Leentje came, they may have had the assistance of a few neighbors in cutting, hauling, preparing and putting up their log dwelling. The only neighbors who we can think of who could come to that "Bee," were Stephen and William Titsworth of the Clove; John Willson, the ancestor of Evi A. Willson, who probably then resided where Evi Vandruff now resides, a Westbrook who then lived at Woodburn, and perhaps some of the Beemer, Coykendall and Middaugh families who lived near Beemerville and Libertyville. Whether they helped, or did not help, in the erection of that historic dwelling is merely conjecture. Certain it is however that Petrus and Leentje, now called in our outrageous English tongue, Peter and Magdalena, were domiciled here shortly after 1730. There were a few straggling Indians resident in the neighborhood, but they had then no grievance against the whites and found no fault with the land taken up by the latter because the Great Spirit they were taught by the law of nature, which was visible everywhere, had given it to all men alike and it was for the common use of all. Here then we bid good night to Peter and Magdalena, as they may be imagined sitting at the door of their humble cabin by the ever flowing spring, gazing out through the gathering shadows of nightfall over the Papakating swamps, whence came the bark of the wolf and the panther's scream.

## CHAPTER VI.

PETER AND MAGDALENA DECKER'S DAUGHTERS, HANNAH, MARIA, CATHERINA, ANNETJE AND HELECA, AND THEIR DESCENDANTS. WAS THERE A MARY?

In due time children came to bless the home of Peter and Magdalena Decker. The eldest was named Hannah, as we are assured by her descendants, Mrs. Bross, of Sparrowbush, and Mrs. Margaret Shorter, of Deckertown. Her name does not appear upon the baptismal records, but it is of importance because she was the first white child born in Deckertown. Mrs. Shorter, attended Hannah's funeral where Thomas Armstrong's farm house now stands in

Wantage, and saw her lying in the coffin. She is undoubtedly the only person living who did so. Hannah at that time was a very old person, and Mrs. Shorter a girl of five or six years. Mrs. Shorter recollects that numerous acquaintances, always called the old lady, who was a great social favorite, "Aunt Hannah." This fact convinces us that the tradition that the eldest child of Peter was a mute is erroneous. The funeral spoken of was about 1820, according to Mrs. Shorter's recollection, and the funeral sermon was preached by Rev. Edward Allen.

There is an old tradition that the first white child born in Wantage was born in the shade of an oak tree, before a house had been erected. Rev. Peter Kanouse alludes to it in his sermon preached at Beemerville in 1844. There had been children born in other parts of the township, as we have seen, before Peter settled Deckertown, consequently the tradition cannot allude to Hannah.

Of the early educational advantages of which Hannah availed herself, we know little. No schools were established in the neighborhood of her youthful home; there were no newspapers and no postoffices. From the time she first played about the logcabin door, to the time of her marriage she probably saw no books, unless it might be a bible, or a simple primer. It may well be supposed that opportunities for social enjoyment were few outside of the home circle. Yet a wooer came for Hannah, and they were married after an acquaintance the previous duration of which is unknown. They were married by Rev. Thomas Romeyn, the pastor of Mackhaekameek church. The following is a copy of the record made in the church books by the minister:

"Married, by Rev. Thomas Romeyn Nov. 19th, 1762, Abram Cole born in Northampton, dwelling in Wantage, to Hannah Decker born and residing in Wantage."

She must have been at this time about



26 or 27 years of age, because being the eldest child she must have been born as early as 1731 or 1735, for the baptism of Maria is recorded in 1736. Josiah Wickham in his recollections has it that Mary married Abram Cole. I can find no record of a daughter of Peter's named Mary, and think perhaps Hannah may have had a middle name, which possibly was Mary, and that thus the one Mr. Wickham speaks of was one and the same with Hannah. Her husband dwelt in Wantage at the time he married her although from Northampton, Bucks Co., Pa., and thus appears to have been of a different family from the Cole family who are by intermarriage related to almost all the ancient families of the Minisink region. The farm upon which Abram and Hannah settled embraced the present Thomas Armstrong farm, the William DeWitt farm in Cooper's Glen, the Samuel Beemer farm and other tracts.

The children of Abram Cole and Hannah Decker were Joseph, Moses, Peter, Hester and Eleanor. Of them, Moses, Peter and Hester lived to old age and died unmarried.

Joseph, the eldest who lived on what is now the Samuel Beemer farm, married Margaret Jackson. Their children were Anna, Abram Jr., James J., Hannah Maria, Eleanor 2nd, Samuel. Of them Anna married John Morrison and they had three children: Adelaide, who died in infancy, Sarah who married Henry Tryon of Sullivan County where they went to reside, and Margaret, born June 4th, 1815, who married Andrew Shorter. The latter died in Deckertown some three years ago, and Margaret his widow who resides with her daughter, Eliza J., in Deckertown, is therefore a direct descendant of Peter Decker's eldest daughter. The eldest son of Joseph and Margaret Jackson Cole, Abram Jr., married a lady named Cole, believed to be of the Minisink Cole family. They had three sons, James L., Moses and Harrison. James L., was educated at Styles' Mt. Retirement Seminary and afterwards

studied medicine. He graduated as a physician. At the time he concluded his studies with Mr. Styles he had no funds to pay for his tuition and Mr. Styles accepted his promise to pay. He went to South America where he married a Spanish lady and is believed to be still living. A few years ago he came with his wife to Deckertown and sought Mr. Styles' people and paid the old tuition bill. His brother Moses married a lady in New York State and went to Minnesota. Their brother Harrison married the widow Raymond, of Newton where they kept the Fountain House till he died. She is still living.

Of James J., son of Joseph Cole and Margaret Jackson, we have no information. Of their daughter Hannah Maria, all we know is that she married Andrew Decker son of James Decker, of Minisink, and went west. Of Joseph and Margaret's son Samuel, it is known that he married Miss Cole. She was a daughter of Gideon Cole by his first wife. Samuel by her had three sons and two daughters. One of those sons is George Pierce Cole, who now resides in Deckertown, and one of the daughters is Mrs. L. C. Bross who resides in Sparrowbush, N. Y. The above named Gideon Cole, after his first wife's death, whose name we do not now recall, married Eleanor 2nd, a sister of Samuel Cole above named. By this second wife he had one child, Hannah. She married John Crawford and they had one child, Eater who married Sid Rutan, and lives in Beemerville. This Gideon Cole was a descendant of a different branch of the Cole family. After Abram Cole, Sr.'s death he became possessed of what is now the William DeWitt farm in Cooper's Glen, where he lived. Joseph Cole, first above mentioned, after his father Abram's death became owner of the Samuel Beemer farm where he lived.

Of Eleanor 1st, in German her name was recorded Lanchia, daughter of Abram and Hannah Cole, the records show that she married John Brink, born Sept. 4th, 1770, son of James Brink and







Roanna Rosenkrans who came from Pike County, Pa., and settled in Sandyston Township in this county about 1790. He, John, lived and died (Dec. 17th, 1812) on the farm known as the Brink Homestead. His wife Eleanor died, at what date we know not, and he then married for a second wife Nancy Drake. His son William Brink, born April 11th, 1789 presumably by his wife Eleanor married for a first wife Anna Haggerty and she dying he married for a second wife Laura C. Newman, born July 15th, 1799. He died April 12th, 1853, and we believe his widow is still living in Milford, Pa. Thomas, his son by his last wife resides in Port Jervis. Mrs. Frank Royce, a daughter by his first wife now (or lately) resided in Port Jervis.

The second child of Peter and Magdalena Decker, was a daughter and is recorded in the baptismal records of Mackhackameek church, born May 18th, 1736, and is the one whom we think Mr. Wickham says was a mute, although he says the mute was the eldest. Upon this point however the recollections of Hannah's descendants supported by corroborative facts are so plain that we feel sure we have correctly given the genealogy. This daughter was named Maria. There are no records of her having but one child, a son named John. He settled on what is now called the lower road in Wantage between Deckertown and Unionville, on the farm owned at present by Mrs. Samuel Chandler. He was born in 1759, and died in Feb. 1803. Mr. Wickham says he was the grandfather of Mrs. Rachel C. Buckley, of Port Jervis. If we mistake not he was buried in the Slanson cemetery in Wantage and his tombstone bears the following inscription:

"John Decker died in Feb. 1803, aged 44 years."

My head and stay is took away,  
And I am left alone,  
My husband dear who was so near,  
Is took away and gone.

I have no me but two daughters with me left,  
With these sorrows hard to bear,

Two of these brothers are here  
And know of father dear."

The third child of Peter and Magdalena Decker was Catherina, baptised May 31st, 1738. She married a German named Fredrick Hayne about 1758. He was not connected with the Haines family at Hamburg, they being of English extraction, and having emigrated from England. The difference in the way the family name is spelled, although pronounced alike, has not therefore originated in a whim or change of spelling, but is an original difference arising from a different nationality. Frederick and Catherina Hayne, after marriage settled upon a farm at Lewisburg, which if we are correctly informed is now owned by Mrs. William McCoy. They both lived and died there. We have only gleaned information as to one of their sons, Peter. Whether they had other children or not we cannot say. Peter Hayne married Martha Lewis, of Baskingridge Aug. 5th, 1784. He lived and died on a farm near the old homestead at Lewisburg. The Megee brothers now own it. They had seven children, Frederick, Huldah, Benjamin, Lydia, Alva, Lewis and Eliza. Of them Frederick became a prominent man in Wantage and his name appears a number of times on the township records.

Huldah married James Evans, and removed out of the State. Of Alva and Lewis we have no record. Eliza married Evi Martin who then lived in Orange County, N. Y. Lydia married for a first husband, Jacob Willson, born May 23rd, 1761, son of Andrew and Martha (Ferguson) Willson, who lived about a mile northeast of Deckertown. Her husband Jacob died soon after their marriage, and she married for a second husband Manuel Coykendall, of Wantage who was the grandfather of Simeon M. Coykendall of Wantage church neighborhood. Benjamin born Oct. 29th, 1721, married in 1815, Milly Whittaker who was then a resident of Unionville, N. Y. Benjamin set up a harness making establishment in Unionville and they re-



lived there. Aug. 30th, 1820 his wife died, and he afterwards married her sister Charlotte. The latter's brother, Samuel, married Margaret, daughter of John E. and Jane Adams, of Wantage, and their son John A. Whittaker is the President of the Farmer's National Bank of Deckertown and very highly esteemed in his public and private life. The children of Benjamin by his first wife were Marcus S., Peter and Milly, and by his last wife, Frances, Lewis, Henry, Caroline, Jacob and Martha. His last wife Charlotte died Dec. 7th, 1869, and he died Nov. 12th, 1843. Of their children Marcus S., born Jan. 23rd, 1816, studied medicine and after graduating in 1841, came to Westtown. In 1843 he married Amelia, daughter of Samuel and Balinda Van Fleet. In 1846 he came to Unionville and practised his profession. His wife died Jan. 30th, 1848. He then, in 1849, married Jane a daughter of Josiah and Hannah (Adams) Decker. This Josiah was a son of Bowdewine Decker, whose father was Josiah Decker, Sr., a son of Peter and Magdalena. The children of Dr. Marcus S. Hayne and Jane Decker, were Marcus P., who went west and others deceased unmarried. His wife Jane died July 16th, 1856, and he afterwards married, Jan. 12th, 1858, Eliza A., daughter of Samuel and Jane Christie by whom he had one son, Samuel Christie Hayne, who resides in Unionville. Dr. Hayne died some ten years since.

Peter Hayne, son of Benjamin and Milly, went to Goshen, N. Y., and his sister married H. B. Lee and went to Western New York.

Frances Hayne daughter of Benjamin and Milly, married Albert W. Van Fleet, of Unionville, her sister Caroline married Oliver W. Cook, of Passaic, and their sister Martha married J. B. Hendershot now of Newton.

To go back again; Peter and Magdalena Decker had a daughter Annetje baptised Jan 20th, 1745 and a daughter Heleca June 21st, 1747, of whom we find no further records. They may not have

lived to adult years. If they did and left heirs this humble work of ours may help some of their descendants; if living, to forward the genealogies of their families to us or to make them known. We are well aware that however painstaking one may be in collecting statistics, records and traditions, some error will creep in, but we trust the finder will not find fault with us, but will thank us just a little for getting them in a shape that will make correction easy. Next week we will take up the subject of Peter and Magdalena's sons.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PETER AND MAGDALENA DECKER'S SONS, JOSIAH, MARTINUS, SAMUEL, YOPE AND RICK.

Josiah, born June 17th, 1740, was the first born of Peter's sons. He grew to be an intelligent and enterprising man. He married Sarah ——— and they settled upon lands in the Clove now owned by Hon. Jacob Swartwout. He built the grist mill near there which is still known as Decker's Mills. He also erected a saw mill there, and had a clover mill for cleaning clover seed, which the farmers then all raised upon their own farms. Mr. Wickham says that in Josiah's time a few Indians lurked about the mountains north of Coleville, and that on one occasion he was fired at by them and wounded in the leg by a bullet, the scars of which he carried to his grave.

The incident was furnished by Wm. Rankin to Barbier & Howe's history as follows: "Mr. Decker had gone out into a field which lay some distance from his house on elevated ground. Ere he was aware, two Indians were stealthily creeping around him, intending to intercept his retreat homeward and to capture him. On his making an attempt to escape, both Indians fired at him, missing him, (except the wound above mentioned.) Decker ran for home and both Indians at his heels. His fami-



ly saw them coming but did not know the cause. The oldest boy was quick to grasp the situation. He seized a musket, and exclaiming "that's dad!" ran out towards them and hid behind an apple tree. One of the Indians was then almost within grasp of Decker. As they came up the boy took aim at the Indian and pulled the trigger, but the gun snapped. Hearing it the Indian stopped suddenly, and then turned and fled." That was in July 1779 just before the Minisink Battle. He had seven children, Bowdewine, Abraham, William, Simon, Femetje, Margaret, and Lanchia. Bowdewine married May 31st, 1787 Naomi Westbrook, daughter of Richard Westbrook born June 14th, 1772. She died April 29th, 1825. He re-married June 8th, 1826 Rebecca VanSickle, born May 1st 1768 and died Sept. 11th, 1845. By Naomi he had children; Richard, born Aug. 15th, 1788, Josiah Jr., born April 15th, 1792, Mary, born Aug. 30th, 1790, Hannah, born Feb. 5th, 1794, Sarah, born Oct. 10th, 1796, Frederick, born May 16th, 1802, and John B., born Nov. 16th, 1803. Bowdewine died in 1857 in his 94th year. He carried on in his lifetime the improvements which his father designed, upon a large scale, kept a store and built a plaster mill, the ore for which was hauled by teams from Newburgh, and Mr. Swartwout informs us that this year, in building his new barns, he unearthed foundations and works that would cost a large fortune to construct in these days. Of his son Richard we have no data. Josiah Jr., married Hannah Adams, of Wantage. They had a daughter, Jane, who married Dr. Marcus S. Hayne, of Unionville as noted in Chap. vi. We have no memoranda of the other children of Bowdewine excepting John B., the youngest son. He married April 24, 1824, Sarah, second daughter of William Decker, who if we mistake not was his cousin. They had eight children, of whom but one has descendents living, viz., Emma R. who married Judson J. Wickham and is living in Deckertown.

Sarah, wife of John B. dying, he married for a second wife, Charity M. Kilpatrick, March 20th., 1855. She was born May 12th., 1824, and died March 15th., 1868. By his second wife, John B. had one child, a daughter, Lillie, who married Hon. Jacob Swartwout, and who now resides on the homestead lands of the elder Josiah. Abraham, son of the elder Josiah married ———. They had but one child, a daughter, William who died Jan. 3rd., 1856, aged 74 years, 4 months, 3 days, son of the elder Josiah, had married Elizabeth Dugan, and had four sons; John D., who died Dec. 20, 1854, aged 54 years, 1 mo., 20d., Richard, Alanson, and Oscar, and five daughters; Maria; Sarah who married John B. Decker; Emeline; Ellen and Eliza. His wife Elizabeth died in 1824, aged 50 years. They are interred in the old Clove Cemetery. Of the foregoing sons of William and Elizabeth Decker, Richard, born Dec. 9th., 1809, married at the Clove where he then resided in 1831, Julia Decker. Julia was the widow of Frederick Decker, son of the elder Bowdewine. Frederick had died soon after marriage, it would appear. it is also on record that Julia's maiden name was Decker. She was born in Vernon township, July 20th., 1803. Richard and Julia had three children, John Harmon born April 9th., 1831, died Sept. 1, 1878; Bowdewine, born Oct. 2, 1843, died July 1st., 1870; and Harriet, born Feb. 2nd., 1835, died Dec. 11th., 1841. After Julia's death Richard married for a second wife Margaret Wickham, of New Hampton, in Orange County, N. Y., born July 19th., 1835, died in 1888. Of his first wife's children John Harmon married Elsie Fullerton, of Wawayanda, Orange Co., N. Y. in October, 1838. They had eight children; William F. Ettie, Ida, Harriet, Abraham L., May, Edward M., and Richard. Of the foregoing, Edward M. resides at 89 Highland Ave., Middletown, N. Y. Their ancestral home was changed from the Clove, in the time of the elder Richard to the handsome farm lying on the road





From Denton to Goshen, N. Y.

Simon, son of the elder Josiah Decker, settled near Beemerville. He had four sons, Henry, John, Simon, and Sidney, and one daughter, name not known. Of them his son John died in 1799, and is buried in the old Beemerville cemetery. He had a son Michael. Michael's son Lucas lived near Beemer church, and had sons, John who now lives in East Deckertown, Andrew living at Andrew Roy's, Peter living near the Plains, and a daughter who married Richard Hill, a prosperous farmer of Libertyville, in Wantage.

Fametje; eldest daughter of the elder Josiah Decker, married Ephraim Kilpatrick. Their son, Simon, married Julia Wickham, sister to Seth Wickham, hereafter mentioned. One of their daughters married Abiah Wilson, of near Deckertown. She now lives with her son Simon on the old homestead, which is about a half mile northeast of town. The son of Simon and Julia Kilpatrick was Judson, who rose to renown during the late civil war. He was promoted to a Generalship, and after the war won distinction as a lecturer.

Lanchia, youngest daughter of the elder Josiah Decker, married Robert Evans, and settled in Deckertown, near where Lafayette Fuller's Mill now is.

Margaret, second daughter of the elder Josiah Decker, married Seth Wickham who settled on a farm between Port Jervis and Coleville, which we are informed was lately or is now owned by H. Clark. One of their sons is Josiah D. Wickham now living in Port Jervis. Their daughter Lydia, married first, William Cole by whom she had two children; William H. Cole, Sr., who now resides in Deckertown, and a daughter Jane, who married Zephaniah Swarts. The latter died about five years since, and his widow now resides in Deckertown. Lydia above named after the death of her husband, William Cole, married Peter A. Hoyt who was a veteran of the war of 1812. He has been now dead for some years. His widow re-

sides in Deckertown, and is perhaps the only pensioner of the war of 1812 now living in Sussex County.

We will now go back to the next eldest son of Peter and Magdalena. His name was Martinus and he was probably born about 1742, his name not appearing on the baptismal records. We are not informed as to whom he married. They went back over the mountain and settled on the flats northwest of where his grandparents Johannis and Heleca Decker lived and died, near what is now Port Jervis. Mr. Wickham says it was where the old stone house stands in Germantown. He had two sons, John born March 20th, 1765, died in 1843, and Richard who went west. John who was more generally known by his German neighbors as "Hans" married for a first wife Sarah Lambert who died Feb. 27th, 1816 aged 59 years, 11 months. They are interred in the old Clove Cemetery, as is also their son Martin who died May 8th, 1836 aged 24 years, 5 months and 19 days. Upon the death of his wife Sarah, John married for a second wife Mary Turner. She was a widow with eight children. Her maiden name had been Mary Shorter. John at the time of his marriage to her had seventeen children by his first wife living. The united family consisted therefore of twenty-five children with which they began housekeeping. They had no more children. His second wife died Feb. 14th 1861 aged 78 years, 1 month, and is interred in the cemetery near Wantage church. The children of John and Sarah were Esther, born Nov. 5th, 1791, Mary born July 7th, 1794, David born May 26th, 1796, Sarah born June 30th, 1798, Jane born Oct. 29th, 1799, Huldah born March 27th, 1804, Margaret born March 29th, 1806, John born Sept. 7th, 1809, Martin born Nov. 19th, 1811, Elizabeth born Feb. 21st, 1812, Hannah Maria born June 25th, 1814, Peter born Jan. 18th, 1818, Abraham J., born March 28th 1819, who for his second wife married Louise DeWitt who now lives in Jamesburg, N. J., Sarah born Dec. 8th, 1820,





who married Mr. Buchanan and died in 1895, Margaret 2nd born Jan. 7th, 1823 who married William McMannus, their son Decker McMannus now being a resident of Deckertown, Jane born March 5th, 1825 who married R. B. Shaw and now lives near Wantage church, and Coe born March 9th, 1827 whose widow afterwards married — Shimer, and now lives in Middletown. Mrs. Shaw is the last surviving one of the children.

When Brant invaded Minisink in July 1779, Martinus, with his son John who was at that time fifteen years old, hid themselves upon the side of the mountain. They saw the Indians burn their grain which was in the shock and also their barn. Mrs. Shaw has heard her father tell the story often. Martinus joined the troops from Goshen and Hamburg next day and took part in the battle of Minisink. He swam the river and escaped. His son John settled on the farm in Wantage lately owned by his son Abraham J. The latter's son by his first wife, John W. Decker, now lives on Hamburg Avenue in East Deckertown.

To go back again; Samuel, the third eldest son of Peter and Magdalena, was born Sept. 27th, 1749. We have found no record as to dates of his marriage or death. He married and settled near where the Loomis homestead now is in Deckertown, and was an energetic business man. He built the first mill in Deckertown which stood on the west bank of the Clove creek opposite where the condensery now stands. The dam for this mill is still standing and forms the elevated highway leading out of town towards Newton where it crosses the flats. This dam formed a large pond of water which occupied the valley where J. Linn Quick's house now stands. The mill was afterwards rebuilt on the east bank of the creek, and the fall of water not being sufficient for an overshot wheel, a new pond was formed farther up the stream and the old pond drained by opening the dam, which opening is now spanned by the Newton Ave bridge. Samuel also built a hotel, the second one in Deckertown, where DeCamp's hotel now stands and owned the upper

mill. Mrs. Lottie Cole who resides on Mill street remembers that after it was completed, it with Mr. Vibbert's hotel on the opposite corner where the Dickson block now stands, were then the only two frame buildings in the village, all the others being of logs. This was about 1820, Mrs. Cole now being in her 87 year. He, Samuel, had four sons and three daughters: Peter J., Samuel Jr., Stephen, Dick, Hannah and Mary, who married Jonathan Coykendall, Sr., Peter, and Samuel, Jr. Stephen settled in Deckertown. Dick or Richard went west. Hannah born May 9th, 1771 married Moses Coykendall whose descendants have been traced in chapters one and two. Peter, Jr., for a time kept hotel in the Vibbert house. Mr. Wickham says he was the first man to have the Low Dutch Church in Deckertown changed to Presbyterian. If by this he means the old church formerly on the school house hill, it supplies a missing link of history, of which more hereafter. Peter's son, Mark Decker is or was formerly a resident of Port Jervis. Peter, Jr., then moved west and we have no further trace of him. Samuel Jr., we have no information of. Stephen settled as near as can be determined near where the old raceway to the mill is, about in the neighborhood of where Mrs. Coykendall's house now stands. The land extending to where the Dickson and Ayer's brick blocks now are, was, on the higher ground, once a fertile piece of meadow land and was called in early surveys of the place, "Decker's meadow." Stephen married Elizabeth Middaugh. Their children were Halsey, John S., Benjamin, Richard, Huldah, Lavina and Susan. The latter died young. Benjamin died young. John S., married Elizabeth Wells of Hunterdon County. He built a house and they lived where J. C. Henderson now lives. Her father was a sea captain and lost his life on the water. Her mother was a Manning from Plainfield and had been married previously to — Dunn who was a half brother to Mrs. John Roy's grandmother. John S. and Elizabeth had four sons and one daughter: Lewis Hayne, (this middle name being for his uncle Lewis Hayne) residing on Harrison street; Elizabeth who married — Henderson and lived at Kerhousen, N. Y., now deceased, who left one child now living in Waterbury, Conn.; J. Emerson residing at Kerhousen; Walter S., residing in Brooklyn, N. Y.; and Mary E., who married Frank P. Adams and resides on Main street.

Huldah, daughter of Stephen and



Elizabeth married Lewis Hayne whose ancestral home was the farm now owned by Samuel Newman. He is deceased and his widow resides in town.

Mrs. Elizabeth Decker, widow of John S., above mentioned resides with her daughter, Mrs. F. P. Adams. She is unusually intelligent and has a remarkable memory for her years.

The fourth son of Peter and Magdalena Decker was Yope. He took the old homestead (the Amos Munson farm) after his father's death. He afterwards sold it to Judge Sayre as we are informed by Alpheus Howell, Esq. Indeed it would appear that Judge Sayre must have purchased nearly all the homestead lands from the heirs of Peter Decker, because he at that time owned and resided upon what is now the Loomis farm previously the property of Samuel Decker. We have no further information concerning Yope, nor the fifth son of Peter, Rick, who lived and died in Deckertown.

(Continued next week)

#### A CORRECTION.

Mrs. Bross of Sparrowbush writes us to correct our statement in chapter vi as to Joseph and Margaret Jackson Cole's son Samuel. He married Mary Decker sister to the Andrew Decker therein mentioned. They had three sons, James, Philip and Samuel, and one daughter, Mrs. Lorna C. Bross, of Sparrowbush.

Mrs. Bross informs us that George Pierce Cole's father was Samuel Cole, but he was a son of Abraham and Hannah (Decker) Cole.

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### PETER DECKER.

From what we have written of Peter and Magdalena Decker's descendants, and including the many other branches of the family tree which are known to exist, but of which the records are faulty, it has been shown that fully eight-tenths of the inhabitants of Deckertown are relatives by blood or marriage to the above named pioneers. As we have before remarked, when this first couple of sturdy American born Hollanders took up their abode in the wilderness at this place, their names were pronounced, in German, Petrus and Lecentje Decker. Of Mrs. Decker we can find scarcely any memoranda, even among the generally ready fields of tradition. Her family name Osterhout, although recurring with some frequency upon the early records does not seem to lead to any disclosure

concerning the early life, date of birth, or education, of this historical mother in the genealogical line of the Decker family. She lived near Kingstou in Ulster County at the time of her marriage to Petrus Decker which took place in Kingston very shortly after 1730. Petrus had been born in 1711, and his birthplace was doubtless in Kingston, or near there because his father, Johannis Decker, as we have seen, came to the Titsworth farm by the Neversink in 1713. After Petrus' marriage and removed to where Deckertown now stands, but little can be gleaned of his progress. We next find mention of his name upon the assessor's books when the people of Minisink Precinct were taxed for building Goshen jail in 1739. In that year his assessment was £1-10s, and his tax 1s. 11d. Only improvements in lands were then taxed, so that we may assume that in the six or seven years he had resided here the clearing made was not very large. But as it comprised all there was of Deckertown, the tax, which in dollars and cents was about 40cts, was the smallest tax undoubtedly ever laid upon the place, or that ever will be laid upon it.

When Morris County was cut up and Sussex County organized in 1853, the dispute between New York and New Jersey claimants to lands along the boundary line was at its height. As we have seen, New York State had exercised authority and collected taxes over a considerable portion of lands now included in New Jersey. The New Jersey Proprietors held that the boundary line ran from the Hudson River in a straight line to the most northward branch of the Delaware River which would have reached Cohecton, and therefore New Jersey claimed that Port Jervis and lands about it belonged to New Jersey. In consequence the New Jersey authorities undertook to assert their rights, and there were lively times along the border, writs of ejectment being plentiful and land owners awake to their interests. In this disturbance we get a



pretty good view of the disposition and appearance of Petrus Decker. Richard Gardner, was employed to survey the boundary line in the same year that Sussex County was organized. He had for chain bearers Petrus Decker and John Herring. On the 20th of July they had progressed as far eastward as Thos. DeKay's settlement in what is now Vernon township. As they were going through a swampy piece of land, the two sons of DeKay, Jacob and George, suddenly came upon them and thumped Gardner and Herring with a club and broke the compass, but did not offer to touch Decker. Gardner went before the New Jersey Council and presented his affidavits and those of his assistants. Gardner first made oath that the DeKay's struck him with a club, and took away from him his surveying instruments such as a compass, dividers, etc., but, said he, "not the least outrage did they offer to Peter Decker, an able man of 40 years, who was no Quaker and who looked on the whole time." John Herring's affidavit was the same as Gardner's, except that he placed Peter Decker's age at 42 years. Then followed the affidavit of Peter Decker. "Peter Decker aged about 42 years, being duly sworn on the holy Evangelists of Almighty God, on his oath declares that he has several times heard the affirmation aforesaid of John Herring read to him, and verily believes of the facts therein related to have been done on the 20th day of July last, are true to the best of his recollection, except the scale and dividers, which he, the deponent, does not recollect to have seen the DeKays' take, but is sure as to compass, chain and bell, and believes as to scale and dividers."

PETER DECKER.

Sworn in Council Nov. 23rd, 1753.

Ch. Read, Cl. of Council.

From the foregoing testimony it is established that Mr. Decker was a large strong man, because the two DeKay's were careful not to molest him, although Gardner seemed to feel a little disappointed because he looked on the whole

time. That he was not opposed to a trial of strength when he thought necessary, for Gardner says he was no Quaker. That his age was as we have stated. That he was a conscientious man, as is shown by the careful manner in which he framed his testimony as to what he saw and what he believed, and lastly that he was an intelligent cautious man, because he kept aloof and took no part in the scrap, and could write because he wrote his name.

October 13th of the same year (1753) the King issued commissions for judges and instituted a system of courts for Sussex County. Nov. 20th of that year the first court of Common Pleas convened in Sussex County at the house of Johaathan Pettit in Hardwick township, (now in Warren County.) Jonathan Robeson, Abraham VanKampen, John Anderson, Johnathan Pettit and Thos. Wolverton were the judges. One of the first things they did was to read the King's commission to Justices of the Peace, who were Richard Gardner, Obadiah Ayers, Japhet Byram and Peter Decker. There were no elections for justices. Thus Mr. Decker was the first public official of any grade in this part of Wantage. A Justice of the peace then had no jurisdiction over suits where more than \$5 was in dispute.

There is only one instance recorded of his judicial action, and that was narrated in a publication called the New American Magazine. In its issue of June 30th 1758 it said: "Some days since a man and boy travelling along the public highway in the said county of Sussex were attacked by the Indians. The man was shot dead. The boy was surprised but finding one of the Indians in pursuit of him he had presence of mind, as the last refuge, to turn and fire upon him, and saw him drop. The other Indian still pursued, and the boy perceiving that his gun so retarded his flight that he must be taken broke it to pieces against a rock that it might not fall into the enemy's hands, and made his escape from them. He then alarmed





the people who immediately went out upon the scout with guns and dogs, and coming to the place where the boy shot the Indian, they found a great deal of blood, but not the body. They searched very diligently about the woods, when at last one of the dogs began barking, and going to see what was the matter they found him barking at a pile of brush and tearing it aside they found the Indian buried with his clothes and tomahawk; upon which they scalped him, and brought away the things they found buried with him. On Tuesday the 16th day of June, Justice Decker of the County of Sussex brought the said Indian scalp and tomahawk to the city of Perth Amboy. This savage proves to be the notorious bloody villain well known by the name of Captain Armstrong, a noted ringleader of the Delawares, who was concerned with Benjamin Springer (lately executed in Morris Co.) for the murder of Anthony Swartwout, his wife and children."

This occurrence was very probably in the vicinity of Deckertown. Congress deemed the boy's act so meritorious that they voted him, calling him in the act "The lad Tietsort," the sum of thirty Spanish milled dollars. They also presented him with a medal of silver, the size of a dollar, whereon was inscribed the bust or figure of an Indian prostrate at the feet of the said Tietsort. Which of the Titsworth boys this was we have not learned, but he was no doubt living near Deckertown since Peter Decker had the Indian's scalp. The medal should have been, perhaps has been, preserved. Who has it? The man and boy are described as walking along the highway. At that time there were no roads in Deckertown known to record. The highways were paths through the woods, traveled by the settlers on foot or on horseback, for they were impassable for wagons except in a few places. On the 30th day of January 1772, Joseph Crowell, Evi Adams, William Southworth, Abiah Brown, Abraham Van-Auken and Johannes Cortrecht, met at

the house of Peter Decker to lay out a road, they being surveyors of highways. They had the surveys before them and then and there formally laid and ordered recorded a new road—the first one recorded in the township of Wantage. Its beginning point was described in the survey as beginning at a point in the Goshen road near said Decker's mills, and running from thence to the foot of the Minisink mountain. This Goshen road, owing to the travel then seeking an outlet to tide water at Newburgh for market, was probably the first one made use of with wagons, from Deckertown. It is conceded to have led from Deckertown across the drowned lands somewhere near William Owen's. The above record by mentioning the mills also shows Decker's mills to have been built previous to that date, 1772. At that time Peter Decker's son Samuel, who has always been credited with building the mills was but 23 years old as can be seen by reference to our last chapter, hence we conclude that the old mill was built by Peter the first, himself. The above recorded road, must have been the one leading from Deckertown through Woodburn to Beemerville and thence to the foot of the mountain.

Aug. 23rd 1791, the surveys of a road were placed on record, leading from Deckertown to connect with a road across the Papakatug which led from Martin's and Willson's (Evi Vandruff farm) to where Hamburg now is, then called Wallings. The beginning point in Deckertown was "50 links north of Robert Morris' ash house," thence south 18 deg. West 5 chains and 50 links, thence south 58 deg. East 3 chains and 80 links, thence south 51 deg. East 6 chains, thence east 3 chains and 10 links, thence south 46 deg. East 11 chains, thence south 51 deg. East 17 chains, thence south 9 deg. West 9 chains, thence south 14 deg. East 14 chains to the south side of Popocotting bridge near Sylvanus Adam's house." By the help of Surveyor James W. McCoy, we have located this first road to Hamburg with





some certainty. The beginning was in what is now Unionville Ave., between the Sayre house and the Catholic church. The valleys then were swamps, hence the road was kept on the hills. It ran from its beginning to about where Lewis H. Decker now lives, and then zigzagged across the swamp in the hollow to Peter Decker's dwelling or just north of it, from whence it turned and ran over the hill where Prof. Seely now lives, and across where John D. Shorter is now building his dwelling house toward where Lebbns Martin now lives, in order to furnish an outlet for the settlers who lived near there, and thence at right angles almost to where the Northrup property is, whence it crossed the Papakating. It very possibly followed a path which had been previously used as a road. In 1817, when the Hoboken and Milford turnpike was constructed, the road was made straight from the Papakating to the hill where the Union House now stands and the old road abandoned.

Of the deaths of Peter and Magdalena Decker no records are known to exist. They almost certainly were deceased before 1800. Hence the stories that some aged people yet indulge in, as to having seen Peter Decker, are certainly errors, and have reference no doubt to his son Peter Decker, Jr. The old couple were buried in the old cemetery in the rear of the present school building on the hill. This cemetery which formed a receptacle for the dead of our incipient town for nearly half a century has been abandoned many years ago. Some of the remains have been removed to other grounds, but so many were there interred whose resting place was marked by a common slab of field stone, without a mark, that the graves of many of the early pioneers are unknown. Among them are our good old ancestral friends Peter and Magdalena Decker who dug out a home for themselves in the wilderness, and at the same time have chiseled their names upon a monument more lasting than marble—the history of Deckertown.

Some twelve years ago excavations on Harrison street allowed the bones of many remains in the old cemetery to become exposed. They were removed in a miscellaneous collection and reburied, so that it may be doubted whether the bones of the worthy couple are yet resting in the soil of their choice. But we doubt not their final sleep will be just as sweet and dreamless wherever their mortal remains are laid.

## CHAPTER IX.

### FIRST BLACKSMITHS, MERCHANTS, TEACHERS, AND PHYSICIANS.

Peter Decker's sons who settled about him in Deckertown, were Samuel, Yope and Bick, and it may be that one or two of his daughters married and settled near by. At all events the small collection of log houses, is reported to have been called at first Deckerville, by the early settlers of the vicinity. Andrew Willson, who settled where Simon Willson now lives just northeast of town, is reported by commonly accepted tradition to have built the first frame house in the neighborhood, about at the close of the Revolutionary war. About the same time Peter Decker built a frame building for a tavern, where Dickson's brick block now stands. This stood farther back from the street than the present brick building does. Several people are yet living who remember seeing the old tavern, and they are pronounced in their memory that the well at Wolfe's marble yard, was just in front of the old Inn. The present buildings must therefore set out toward the road fully ten feet farther than the old one. This hotel was afterwards purchased by Softeign Westfall, and he sold it again to Dr. Vibbert who had married a daughter of Joseph Sharp, of Sharpboro, which name he had given to what had formerly been called Wallings, now Hamburg. Dr. Vibbert kept hotel there for some years, and finally rented the house to Peter Decker, Jr., who kept hotel there.



Shortly after this house had been built, Samuel Decker built a frame house for a hotel where D. S. Goble's property now is. Those two frame buildings remained the only ones of that kind here as late as 1820, according to the recollections of Mrs. Lottie Cole, who says that all others were then log houses.

The first blacksmiths in the place are believed to have been the two Shepherd brothers, who joined Col. Meeker and Capt. Harker when they passed through Deckertown on their way to the battle of Minisink July 20th, 1779. They were both killed in that battle, but one of them, Abram, must have had a family living in town because his son James is mentioned as a blacksmith here. Exactly where this first blacksmith shop was located is not definitely known. Some old inhabitants have a tradition that it was where the Opera House block is now located. The above blacksmith, James, afterwards bought property east of the village and took up farming where, George Shepherd, one of his descendants now resides.

The first merchant of the town is not definitely known, but the location has been quite well decided upon as being where Moses Ayers now has his meat market. Michael McMann, is believed to have been one of the first, who kept a store there and James Sayre the next. They sold whiskey more frequently than molasses, and indeed liquor was more an article of household consumption than was molasses at that time. We have been informed by one gentleman whose memory extends back to the time when a store was kept, where we have stated, of an incident illustrative of those early customs. He came to Deckertown with his uncle, and being a small lad rode in the hind part of the wagon. His uncle, after buying the articles he came after, which included the usual jug of of applejack and the unusual one of a jug of molasses, and being treated by the storekeeper two or three times, put the two jugs in the

wagon side by side and they started for home in the evening. While driving along his uncle got thirsty and reaching back in the wagon seized the jug and taking out the stopper elevated the jug to the proper degree and put his lips to the mouth of it. There was a choking, then a splashing of the contents over him as he lowered the jug, and then a very mad man. He had got hold of the molasses jug.

The grist mill built as we have stated by Peter Decker, was owned afterward by his son Samuel, and afterward by Dr. Vibbert, who rebuilt them in 1844, on the east bank of the creek. The premises are now occupied by the condensery.

A gentleman has told us of an incident which took place in the old Vibbert house which was as follows: John B. Decker, always known as Johnnie B., who then resided in the Clove, one morning missed an overcoat and one or two articles which had been taken from a wagon by his wagon house. He saw by two men's tracks which way the thieves had gone and followed them to Deckertown. When he came in the barroom of the Vibbert house two men were sitting there. Johnnie B., asked the landlord if two men had lately arrived there, and he pointed out the two strangers. When Johnnie B., turned towards them, one of the men arose and dashed out of the back door. Mr. Decker made a desperate rush after him and they went out of the back yard in full speed. A brook ran from the spring now on Jud Wickham's lot, through by where Dr. Moore now lives, and it formed a sunken morass of brush and mud. When the thief reached the banks he made a tremendous leap for the other side which he safely reached, just escaping Mr. Decker's grasp. Without a moment's hesitation he leaped after him, but fell short and went down in the mud to his middle. The thief escaped, but his companion who remained gave up the stolen articles to Mr. Decker and was not prosecuted.



A distillery was early in operation, and as Samuel Decker at one time owned the premises, which adjoined the hotel he built, now the DeCamp or Goble House, it is probable that he erected the distillery. It stood where the shoe factory now is, and had a high trough over the road to convey the cider to the distilling room which was by the spring where J. J. Wickham's house now stands. This distillery was in operation for many years and is yet remembered by many old people.

The first physician who appears to have had principal charge of the Deckertown practice, was Dr. Berret Havens. He came to Deckertown from Connecticut in 1782 when he was 20 years old and began the practice of medicine. He was Deckertown's physician for 28 years. He married Jane, eldest daughter of William and Margaret (Middaugh) Titsworth of the Clove. She died Jan. 9th, 1807 in the 73rd year of her age, and he died Dec. 23rd, 1845, in the 83rd year of his age. They are interred in the Clove Cemetery. They left two children, James C., and Jane T. James C., had a son James C., Jr., whose son, Johnathan, was a prominent physician in Deckertown in 1864 and 1865. His sons Gabriel of Newark, and Barret, of Passaic, survive him.

Dr. Berret Havens after his wife's death practiced till 1820 when he relinquished the field to Dr. Heman Allen, son of Elisha Allen, of Vermont. Dr. Allen was 41 years of age when he came to Deckertown. He owned the property now belonging to Mrs. John B. Thompson. He followed his profession here for about 25 years. He died some 14 years later (Dec. 22nd, 1859.) and is interred in the Deckertown Union Cemetery. One of his daughters married John Halstead, whose son Prof. Allen B. Halstead is now principal of important public schools in Massachusetts. Another daughter married Sanford Leach, of whose sons, Heman A., now resides at Sparta, and Lemuel W., re-

sides just south of the borough on the Hamburg road.

Dr. Alexander Linn, son of John Linn of Harmony Vale, after graduating as a physician came to Deckertown and located in 1837. In 1845 he married Julia, daughter of Dr. Horace Vibbert. He practiced medicine in this place for 30 years. He died May 12th, 1868, aged 57 years. Dr. Carlos Allen also practiced medicine in Deckertown for four years previous to 1846.

Dr. Lewis Westfall, son of Matthew Westfall succeeded to Dr. Linn's practice in Deckertown but died May 20th, 1869, aged 30 years.

Later physicians are well known. Dr. J. Moore and Dr. H. D. VanGaasbeek now appear to each be doing a profitable business.

The first establishment of a school here is somewhat difficult to ascertain. In 1774, according to Rev. Peter Kanouse there were but three dwellings in Deckertown, and there were three school houses in the township of Wantage. Where those three school houses were located he does not mention, but we have no information that any of them were in Deckertown. One of the three schools mentioned he says, "was taught by an African servant and the other two by foreigners better qualified for ostlers than for teachers." In 1780 he speaks of a school house thatched with straw. The first school house in Deckertown is reported to have been located near where the Union House now stands, and a teacher named Gunn is the first reported one in the place. Very little is known of him. There was another school house located afterward near where Edward Feaks' dwelling now stands. It was of logs and I have conversed with several aged people who remember it. After the close of William Rankin's select school on the hill about 1852, the building he had occupied was obtained for the use of the public school, and has ever since been the home of public instruction in the place. Principal Wm.



II. Grenelle and three assistants now compose the staff of teachers.

The select school of Wm. Rankin who had been previously a teacher in Sussex County, was established in 1833, the same year in which Edward Styles founded his Mt. Retirement Seminary. Schools of that kind were not viewed with much favor by the townspeople then, they being considered of a fanciful and fashionable nature. Mr. Rankin with difficulty secured a small room about 14 feet square, which if we have been correctly informed was where the building owned by Owen J. Little now stands in front of Goble's hotel annex. The first day of the school only one scholar presented himself, and he had come from Unionville. That one scholar now resides in Deckertown and is no less a person than John A. Whitaker, President of the Farmer's National Bank. Mr. Rankin used to narrate an anecdote which illustrated the habits of some of Deckertown's citizens. One evening when he had been out walking about two months after he began school he did not get back until about eleven o'clock in the evening. His surprise was great on coming in sight of his school room to find it all lighted up. He was sure he had locked the door when he left it. He went to a window and looked in. The room was well filled with gentlemanly well dressed men, some standing, others seated round a table which was almost covered with money of various kinds—all giving attention to a game that was in progress with cards. He then unlocked the door and stepped in. No seeming notice, however was taken of him and after observing the scene a few minutes he observed to a gentleman standing near him that he would be thankful if when they were done using the room, they would leave it in good order. He then retired and in the morning upon returning found the room divested of men, money and table—the door locked, all in good condition. We do not doubt

however but there have been other scenes of similar import in Deckertown since then. From that small beginning—one scholar—Mr. Rankin's school grew to 76 scholars, and that too while Mr. Styles school was so near and was being extensively patronized at the same time. Mr. Rankin taught some 18 years here, and then went to Amity and from there to Mendham where he taught a similar school for many years. While in Deckertown he was a great student of local scenery and geological formations. A conical mound in the meadow in front of Hugh McGee's residence he felt quite assured was the work of mound builders—the prehistorical race of which such decided handiwork is to be seen in some of the western states. Several times he led his scholars to the place and caused them to make surveys of the mounds, which was a very good exercise for them even if they brought to light no farther evidence of the lost race.

#### CHAPTER X.

##### THE FIRST CHURCH AND ITS PASTORS, NOW THE THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WANTAGE.

The first religious movement towards an organized form of worship in Deckertown we have been unable to trace to a certain date. In the petition asking for the establishment of a church in the Clove dated Aug. 21st, 1787, the petitioners say that some members of the Dutch Reformed church,—"a few in number had settled our county about 40 years before, since which time Rev. Thomas Romeyn had preached for them occasionally" tradition says principally in Helmos Pittsworth's barn in the Clove. At inclement seasons these services were doubtless held in private houses. The above petition was signed by 55 residents, principally of the upper Clove neighborhood. It was followed by the organization of the church and its incorporation as the first Presbyterian Church of Wantage under an act passed





by the New Jersey Legislature, March 10th, 1783, which was the first to legalize the incorporation of religious organizations. A log church was built near the present location of the Clove church and Rev VanBenschoten became its pastor in 1788. We consider it more than likely that Peter Decker's family and the few people in Deckertown at that time attended church there, because subsequent moves concerning a church in Deckertown indicate that Mr. Decker's family preferred that mode of worship, although the Baptist had a church built previously (in 1778,) where the Papakating church now stands. This was nearer Deckertown, and the church records say it was taken from Hamburg there because "large numbers of its members lived in Wantage." Rev. Nicholas Cox was its pastor at that time, and until 1782, and we may conclude that Mr. Decker and his children often attended there.

Nov. 24th, 1817, soon after Mr. VanBenschoten's death, the Clove church was by a vote of its members changed to a Presbyterian church, and upon its organization as such, Aug. 11th, 1818 had 25 members. This small membership from so large a congregation, leads us to conjecture that about this time a good part of the members from Deckertown formed a branch organization of their own, because they found it difficult to attend Clove church at all seasons owing to the distance. Exactly when they first built an edifice we cannot determine but it is understood to have been a frame building, and as we have before mentioned, that, according to Mrs. Lottie Cole's recollections, in 1820, only the two frame buildings she named were here, consequently the church was erected subsequently. It has been stated that this first church was a union one, built by various denominations jointly, but I no where find any evidence of it. On the contrary it is among the remembrances of Josiah Wickham that it was a Presbyterian and was

"founded by Peter Decker." If built by Peter it must certainly have been Peter Decker, Jr., for the first Peter Decker was undoubtedly deceased before that time. That it belonged to the Presbyterian denomination is corroborated by all other circumstances related of those times. At first it was conducted separate from the Clove church. This we gather because about the time of its inception Rev. Gershom Williams was pastor of the Clove church, and no tradition mentions his having charge of the Deckertown branch. Rev. Enos Osborn was the first pastor of this old church on the school house hill without a doubt, not as a regular supply at first, but as an assistant to Mr. Williams. Among the papers left by Rev. Edward Allen occurs the following memorandum dated "Friday Dec. 18th, 1818." "Arrived at Newfoundland and preached in the evening at the house of Maj. Sutton. The attendance was good. Had the pleasure of seeing Bro. Enos A. Osborn, on his way as a missionary to Deckertown, to assist Rev. Mr. Williams. The Lord is reviving his work in that region." Rev. Mr. Allen mentions him again, "Wednesday, June 9th, 1819. Bro. Enos Osborn, laboring at Deckertown, called on me (at Mr. Linn's in Hamburg) and spent the day. We examined the points on which he expected next week to be examined by Presbytery for ordination.

"Thursday, p. m., preached at the school house (New Prospect) near Mr. Giveans's (ancestor of John F. Giveans now of our town) to a full and interesting house. Spent the night at Esq. Buckley's, an elder."

"Friday. Visited Mr. Giveans's family. Conversing with the old gentleman on many points. He is indulging a hope. Also with two young women—both seriously impressed."

In 1820 Rev. Edward Allen became pastor of the Wantage church (Clove) but first regularly began his services with the beginning of the year 1821.



During his charge, the Deckertown congregation united with the Clove, and he preached alternately in either. This is shown by a memorandum made by Robert Ogden as follows:

"Saturday, Oct. 23rd, 1824. Went to Deckertown. Lodged at Mr. Allen's Sabbath 24th. Attended the communion at the new meeting house below the mountain, in Wantage, (Beemerville) under the pastoral care of Mr. Edward Allen. A powerful and extensive revival of religion has taken place in that congregation, and the congregation of the Clove and Deckertown, now united under the care of Mr. Allen. Over 122 members were received into the church, of whom more than 50 were baptized. Mr. J. Foster Halsey, a licentiate from the seminary at Princeton was there an assisted Mr. Allen in the administration of the ordinance. The house, though large, was crowded to overflowing. The exercises of the day were solemn, impressive, edifying, and consoling, and in the highest degree alarming to the impenitent. Oh my God, let not the operations of Thy Spirit be suspended, but may they still be visible among that people and also be extended to this barren corner of thy vineyard."

Mr. Allen preached until 1830 when he resigned. During that time 342 members were added to the church—that is to the three under his charge. He resided in Deckertown but we cannot point out the location of his dwelling or the parsonage, if it may have been so called at that time. When he resigned from the charge of the Wantage churches he accepted a call to the Milford, Pa., Presbyterian church and was there four years. During that time the three Wantage congregations determined that they were too large and those members at Beemerville drew off and built the stone church now there. Rev. Edward Allen preached the dedicatory sermon Jan. 4th, 1835, and was given charge of it as pastor where he remained until 1841. He then returned to Mil-

ford, Pa., and afterwards at other churches in Pennsylvania. Haines says, "As many as ten church buildings owe their erection to his endeavors." We have no account of his early life. He married for his first wife Elizabeth, daughter of John and Martha (Hunt) Linn, of Hamburg, born Sept. 2nd, 1792. She was a sister to Alexander Linn, M. D., mentioned in our last chapter. Mr. Allen when he first came to Wantage was a young man comparatively. He taught school at Beemerville where Alpheus Howell of our town was one of his scholars. He was but one month older than his wife, whom he married at Hamburg in 1820. Mr. Haines says his appearance was so youthful, that at the great meeting held at Beemer church Aug. 56th, 1818, "some dissatisfaction was expressed at the suggestion that Mr. Allen should preach at the great meeting. But as he stood in the doorway he soon carried the hearts of his great auditory with the earnest piercing words he used. They were deeply affected, and from this time Mr. Allen's reputation as a preacher was established." There were estimated to have been 2,000 persons present at that time. After the death of his first wife he married for a second, Louisa T. Richardson, of Pa., who was a widow. He died Aug. 1st, 1877. The following of his children grew to man and womanhood. John Linn his eldest son, studied for a physician, and graduated in 1845. He settled in Beemerville for the practice of his profession, but he remained only a few months there, removing to Branchville in the spring of 1846. He entered into partnership there with Dr. Beach, and they practiced medicine there for a number of years. June 27th, 1850 he married Charlotte, daughter of Judge John Bell of that place. He then removed to Lafayette where he followed his profession until his death a few years ago. His widow with her sons now reside in Newark. Sarah Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Rev. Edward and Elizabeth Allen, married Milton Dim-



mick, a well known lawyer of Milford, Pa. She is now dead. Martha Linn, second daughter, married Hawkins Di-Perry, a civil engineer and railroad man from Philadelphia, where she died. Mary L., third daughter, died unmarried. Henrietta L., fourth daughter, unmarried, is now residing in Newton. Emma E., fifth daughter, married Geo. B. Boyd, M. D., of Scranton, Pa., where she now resides. William Edward, second son, early entered into the study of medicine, and graduated as a physician. He became a prominent man in his profession and now resides in Scranton, Pa. He married Amelia Clapp, of Brooklyn, N. Y.

In 1835 Rev. George Pierson became pastor of the Clove and Deckertown churches. In 1839, May 1st, he recognized the appeal of a number of his members and Deckertown again became a separate organization. It became incorporated under the name of the third Presbyterian church, with Lewis Whittaker, Jacob Beemer, Horton Boemer, and John Smith, elders. In September of that year James W. Wood became its pastor. He preached in the old church six years. During the latter part of his term, money was contributed and arrangements made for building a new edifice. It was completed in 1845, where the present edifice now stands. The old church was then abandoned and was idle until Mr. Rankin secured it for the use of his academy. Its main building now forms Principal Grenell's room in our public school building, and is upon its original foundation. This venerable room was the only church edifice Deckertown possessed for 27 years. We are sorry that the records have not given us some information of its first pastor, Rev. Enos Osborn.

Rev. A. B. Rich, was called to the pastorate of the new edifice and remained until 1844, adding 20 members to the church. He then resigned. Until 1849, for some reasons, the church was without a supply. Then Rev. A. B. Farrand was called to the pastorate, and discharged its duties until 1855. Then succeeded Rev. Wm. H. Babbitt, for two years, Rev. Peter Kanouse, for six years; Rev. O. H. P. Deyo, one year; Rev. P. J. Timlow, four years; then Rev. N.

Elmer, Rev. J. W. McWilliams, Rev. E. A. Hamilton; Rev. O. P. Coleman; Rev. A. Mc. A. Thornburn, and again Rev. E. A. Hamilton the present pastor. During the charge of Rev. Mc. A. Thornburn, the church edifice was thoroughly overhauled and repaired at a cost of several thousand dollars, and placed in its present completed state. Two of the foregoing pastors died in Deckertown, Rev. J. W. McWilliams and Rev. Peter Kanouse. The former who had married Miss Rebecca Willson, of Deckertown, died in September 1873. Rev. Peter Kanouse died May 30th, 1864, and is interred in Fairview Cemetery. His widow still owns property on Harrison street, and she spends a few months in town every year.

His historical sermon preached at Beemerville Jan. 7th, 1844, was published in pamphlet form and had a wide circulation. In it he mentions a remarkable circumstance as follows. "Sixty five years ago (1779) Mr. Joel Crowell (who we are informed lived near where Gabriel Ludlum now resides) cut a white oak tree about two feet in diameter, and, upon opening it, two distinct marks of an axe were found at the heart, made there when young, and probably by some straggling white man. The growth of the tree—say 140 layers or rings—and the time of the discovery by Mr. C would carry us back not very far from 200 years when these wounds were inflicted." This would have reached back to 1574, a period when the Dutch scouts were ranging the wilderness in search of the precious metals. May not that tree have been hacked by Arent Schuyler in 1694 when he passed through here to the Minisink country as mentioned in the first part of this history? Mr. Kanouse in his sermon describes the condition of the early settlers of Wantage thus: "In a howling wilderness, with a family of children to feed, clothe and educate; farms to clear, houses, mills and barns to erect, and roads to open and render passable, there was much to do and more to suffer. A log hut with one room, was parlor, kitchen, bedroom and all. There was no furniture to dazzle without profit. Oiled paper might serve for window glass, a pail of water for a mirror, a pine knot for a candle, and the wheel and the loom made the music of the family. The father supplied the wool and flax, and the fair hands of our mothers and daughters furnished the thread, the cloth, and the ready made garments. They were rich in their own resources. Their wants were few and simple. And their





bread was the sweeter because the plow had been driven through the virgin soil that received the seed, by the hand of the mother, and the sheaf had been pressed in the arms of the daughter." Again he says in speaking of the institutions and education and religion here: "They are green and blooming in the pearly drops of the morning, and if half a century has, with the blessing of God, started us into being, and placed us upon vantage ground, what—if we do not prove recreant to our mercies, to our Redeemer, and our increased responsibilities—what may not be anticipated and realized by the coming generations? The igniting spark is treasured up in the movements of the present age, the thunderings of whose joy will be heard and felt by our far off descendants, rolling onward with increasing power, until the whole universe shall burst forth in one united acclamation "Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

(Continued next week)

**CORRECTION.** Lewis Adams corrects the location of the very early school house mentioned in chapter ix. It was situated where Mrs. Carrie Cox now resides.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF WANTAGE AND THE M. E. CHURCH.

It is perhaps well enough, at this point, to note the corroboration given by the traditions of another family to the early settlement of John DeDecker at Kingston (or Esopus,) as mentioned in Chapter I. Rev. S. D. Decker, pastor of the M. E. Church, gives the tradition which has always been prevalent in his family, that the progenitors of the Decker family in America were three brothers who very early came to New Amsterdam (New York.) One of them settled up along the Hudson river, one of them settled on Staten Island, and the third settled in the south. The one who that tradition says settled up along the Hudson river, was no doubt John DeDecker, judging from the time and circumstances. From the one who settled upon Staten Island is traced the descent of Rev. S. D. Decker of our town. There was also a Henry Decker, by tradition known to be a relative to the

Deckers of Deckertown, who settled at Ogdensburg in 1795. We have seen that the descendants of Yope and Rick Decker, sons of Peter the first, who had residences in Deckertown, have not been accounted for, and, it is very possible that this Henry was a son of Yope, who Josiah Wickham says, occupied what was of late the Amos Munson farm. Henry had three sons, James, William and Benjamin, and three daughters, Susan, Jane and Margaret. The latter married — Mapes and moved to Ohio, Jane married John Happaree and went to Pennsylvania, Susan went unmarried with her sister, Mrs. Mapes to Ohio, William resided, when he died, by the Delaware above Port Jervis, Benjamin died in Deckertown, and James lived and died near Sparta. The latter built the mill now owned by James L. Decker his son. Mr. Decker married Miss Norman, a daughter of John Norman, of Ogdensburg, and his death occurred Feb. 5th, 1862 when he was 75 years old.

Of Benjamin, who died in Deckertown, we have it upon the authority of Mrs. John S. Decker, of our town, that he lived upon what was in his day called the stone house farm. It was probably so called because the house in which he lived was built of stone. It stood near where the dwelling house of Mrs. John Loomis now lives. Mrs. John S. Decker recollects that when young she went to his house and visited there. He was a tall man and very intemperate, so that all the neighbors pitied his family.

The Deckertown Baptist church had its inception as early as 1751. A number of Baptists settled at Hamburg in that year from Connecticut. They selected one of their number, William Marsh, for a pastor. A log meeting house was erected there, on Lawrence's Hill. In 1763, Mr. Marsh, having previously enunciated some doctrinal views which did not suit some of his congregation, quit preaching and went to Wyoming. A colony from Connecticut had purchased lands there, and made a set-





tlement previously. Sussex County tradition, affirms that he was there massacred by Indians; but the history of that colony shows that about that time a bitter warfare of ejection was carried on by the Pennsylvania proprietors, who had counter claims to the lands, in which many persons on both sides lost their lives. In that struggle he was probably slain, since his name is not found among the victims of the Indian attack in 1780. Rev. Constance Hart succeeded him in the ministry at Hamburg. In 1772 Rev. Nicholas Cox succeeded him. In 1778 a new building was erected where the present edifice stands. It was incorporated under the title of the "First Baptist church of Wantage." Rev. James Finn succeeded him in 1783. Rev. Silas Southworth succeeded him in 1785. He died Feb. 20th, 1814. Elders — — Hall and Thos. Teasdale, supplied the church till Nov. 4th, 1815, when Rev. Levi Hall became pastor. He died Aug. 21st, 1821, and Elder John Hagan supplied the church as pastor until 1825, when Rev. Leonard Fletcher became pastor. In 1830 a new meeting house was erected which is still standing called the Papakating. He was followed by Elder Timothy Jackson until Oct. 1835, when he was succeeded by Elder Isaac Moore. The latter was succeeded by Elder Wm. M. Fay in 1840. In 1842 Rev. Sanford Leach succeeded him. In 1845 Rev. D. F. Tunis, became pastor but resigned in 1849, when Rev. T. Davis succeeded him until 1858. Rev. J. Belden succeeded him for a short time. In 1861 Rev. G. F. Love became his successor, and remained until 1865 when Rev. D. T. Hill succeeded. In 1870 Rev. G. F. Love came back for a short time and was followed by Rev. Mr. Jewitt and he by Rev. J. D. Dyer. In 1882 he was followed by Rev. L. O. Grenelle. In 1882 the present edifice was erected on Hamburg Avenue, it being the understanding that upon its erection services were to be held in the old church called the Papakating, once a day, and in the church in town, even-

ings. It was soon found more convenient to hold the services in the new church altogether, and the other stands practically idle. Mr. Grenelle was succeeded by Rev. A. R. Wilson, who did not remain long. He was succeeded by Rev. Charles C. Lathrop the present very efficient incumbent. The First Baptist church as will be seen has a very ancient record. Before the erection of the church on school house hill, 1818 or 1819, the people of our town divided their attendance as we have mentioned between the Papakating and Clove churches.

In the life of Rev. Zelotas Grenelle it is stated that "on this entire field, he labored as the pastor of the First Wantage four years and six months." This was previous to 1821. This would seem to have meant the supplying of the Baptist churches at Meadville near Mt. Salem but in Orange Co., N. Y., and alternate preaching in the Union church at Beemerville, because Elder Levi Hall had charge of the First Wantage at that time. The trials of Rev. Zelotas Grenelle towards procuring an ordination were a fair sample of church discipline prevalent in those days. At an examination meeting where he and another minister were to preach, Elder Lebeus Lathrop was in charge. When Mr. Grenelle was in the middle of his discourse, Elder Lathrop arose from his seat in front of the pulpit and said in a stern tone of voice, "Young man you are wrong." The young man dropped into his seat as if shot, and the other minister took his place and went on with the meeting. But he persevered, and I will give a description of his setting apart to the gospel ministry. "In August 1819, the meeting was held in a grove adjoining the frame building at Meadville. A large audience was in attendance and the exercises were solemn and impressive. The following churches were represented by their messengers in the council: The First Baptist of Wantage, Hamburg, Brookfield (State Hill), Deerpark (New Vernon), and Middle-



town. A large lumber wagon was driven into the middle of the grove, and served as a pulpit. It was capacious enough to contain all the ministers present. The ordination sermon was preached by Aaron Perkins. Henry Ball offered the ordaining prayer. Thomas Teasdale, Sr., gave the hand of fellowship and Levi Hall gave the charge." Of those ministers, the two last named are now sleeping in the Deckertown Union (Papaking) cemetery.

From 1822 to 1833, occurred the division of the Baptist churches into the old and new school branches. It began with the opposition of many members and ministers to innovations and changes in the heretofore settled rulings and customs of the church. About the year 1826 many churches withdrew from the old associations and formed "new school" organizations. For a long time the dispute made sad havoc with the attendance and congregations at their different churches, but I do not find that it affected the First Baptist of Wantage as much as some others.

In 1783, says Kanouse, "this church consisted of about 100 members. In 1812 under the labors of Elder Southworth there was an extensive revival. Between the years 1816 and 1821 during the ministry of Elder Levi Hall the church enjoyed an almost continuous revival. From 1826 to 1831, during which time Elder Leonard Fletcher was their preacher multitudes were added to its members by baptism and a thorough reform took place, and antimonism was rooted out. He left the church in great union and harmony."

The Wantage Methodist Episcopal church may be said to have been the parent organization of that denomination in the township and the present borough of Deckertown. For a period of some years previous to 1831, M. E. church meetings had been held occasionally in private houses, and in the school house near where the Wantage church now stands. In that year the present church edifice was built. Rev. Mr.

Shaw was its first pastor. For six years it was the only M. E. church in Wantage township. In 1837, a second one, known as the Red church was built in northern Wantage. In 1856 steps were taken towards building a third church, which was located where it now stands on Bank street, on a lot which was donated for the purpose by Increase Stoddard. The edifice was completed during the winter of 1857 and 1858, and dedicated Feb. 3rd, 1858. Rev. Isaac Croes was its first pastor. The Wantage M. E. church has been supplied by ministers of the Deckertown church for many years. The ministers have been Isaac Cross, John Seran, Jacob Fort, John Faull, J. N. VanZant, Benj. Palmer, J. N. Keys, Geo. W. Horton, Walter Chamberlain, E. V. King, J. N. Keys a second time, W. R. Keifer, J. N. Crasto, W. M. Johnston, Rev. J. H. Timbrell and S. D. Decker the present talented, popular, and hard working incumbent.

Rev. J. N. Keys, deceased in Deckertown a few years since and is interred in Fairview cemetery. He was a very popular minister and noted for his ready wit as well as high scholarly attainments. Mrs. Keys his widow still resides in town.

During the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Kiefer, the church building was thoroughly repaired, in fact rebuilt, and presents a very stylish appearance, both externally and internally.

St. Monica's Roman Catholic church, on Unionville avenue, was erected 20 years ago by the subscription of the inhabitants of Deckertown. It is under the pastoral care of the church at Franklin Furnace. In the great blizzard of six years ago, the edifice was blown down, but was soon rebuilt. It has an increasing membership. Rev. Father Boylan, of Franklin Furnace has charge of it, and conducts services there monthly, and is popular and well liked by his parishioners.

(Continued next week)

Correction. In chapter x there seems

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2018	100	100	100	100	400
2019	100	100	100	100	400
2020	100	100	100	100	400
2021	100	100	100	100	400
2022	100	100	100	100	400
2023	100	100	100	100	400
2024	100	100	100	100	400
2025	100	100	100	100	400
2026	100	100	100	100	400
2027	100	100	100	100	400
2028	100	100	100	100	400
2029	100	100	100	100	400
2030	100	100	100	100	400

to be a clash of dates in regard to the preaching of Rev. James B. Wood in the old church on school house hill. It is stated in a deed given by the trustees of the Third Presbyterian church to Wm. Rankin, April 8th, 1837, a copy of which is in the possession of Surveyor James W. McCoy, for the lot upon which the old church stands on the hill, that the deed was given to Mr. Rankin because a deed given to him by the former trustees was lost. In one of those deeds reference is also made to a deed conveying the lot to the former trustees by James B. Sayer. It is within the recollection of Mr. McCoy also, that Mr. Rankin occupied the room that he first rented for school purposes but for a few years. He began in 1833, so that, from his deed above given it would appear that he certainly took possession of the old church on the hill as early as 1836. This being so it would hardly be probable that during Rev. Mr. Wood's pastorate from 1839 to 1845, that he preached in the old church occupied at the same time by Mr. Rankin. In Rev. A. B. Rich's charge of the Presbyterian church our types said that he preached succeeding Mr. Wood to 1844. It should have read 1847. In 1828, it is on record, that Rev. Edward Allen engaged William Rankin to teach school for him in a select school, at his residence in the Clove. From this it would seem that Rev. Mr. Allen's residence in Deckertown where Mr. Ogden staid over night as he mentions in 1824, may have been in the Clove at that time. We may in a future chapter continue the corrections of some old time traditions, but the new church mentioned as built in 1845 should be 1835.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE POST OFFICE — THE BANK — OUR LODGES AND OUR RAILROADS.

Post offices were not located in Sussex County until the close of the Revolutionary war, so far as we have been able to ascertain. The post office at Newton was instituted previous to 1795. This was mentioned during the efforts made in that year to get a post office established at Hamburg, in the papers drawn up for that purpose, stating that Newton was then the only office in Sussex. Those efforts at that time were due to the energy of Thomas Lawrence, Sr.,

who having removed to Hamburg, from Princeton, was desirous to have better convenience of communication with the outside world than that place then enjoyed. He agitated the project in 1794, and found a willing assistant in Joseph Sharp, who was then running iron works there. In making application for the office however they differed materially as to the name it should have. The village had till then been called Sharpstown, after Mr. Sharp's works. But Jesse Potts in 1792 had built large iron works near where the old Haues homestead stands, which he had named Hamburg after that city in Germany. He joined with Mr. Lawrence in a petition to have the post office named after his works. There were counter petitions and much work done by Mr. Sharp and Mr. Lawrence for their respective sides of the case, but the latter triumphed and so the office, Oct. 1st, 1795, was named Hamburg, and that has named the village. At that time it was a far more important place than Deckertown, owing to the iron works. Sparta, three years later, (Jan. 1st, 1798,) followed with a post office. Deckertown did not get to be thus honored until the Hoboken, Hamburg and Millford Turnpike was built through the place, which was not till about 1816 as near as we can ascertain. There certainly was no office here in 1811 as appears from a list of the six post offices of Sussex county published that year. The mails were first brought to Deckertown when the stages began to run. They brought them three times a week. Deckertown was called a days journey from Hoboken, being 59 miles distant, as can be seen by one of the mile stones which is yet standing upon the property of H. A. Leach on Hamburg avenue. We have not learned the name of the first Deckertown postmaster. Samuel Whittaker was postmaster in 1837, and occupied that position many years. As he came to Deckertown in 1835, it is evident that he had had perhaps several predecessors in the office. The office in those early days was loca-





to I in a store, and the postmaster generally looked after his trade and the office at the same time. The post office at Libertyville was not established until 1844, it being on the above mentioned stage route. During the time John Loomis was postmaster at Deckertown the mail matter began to get very bulky and shortly afterward his successor succeeded in getting the office graded, and kept in a separate building as it now is, under its present efficient postmaster, Humphrey Martin. The civil war of '61 to '65, was the building up of a very large demand for increased postal facilities. It may also be reckoned as the great school of daily instruction, from newspapers, in this vicinity. Previous to that a daily newspaper only found its way here through the mails and rarely at that. Now a large number of dailies are sold by Mr. Hendershot and Mr. Satton every day from their news stands.

In 1845, the expediency of establishing a bank in Deckertown began to be agitated. It at last was brought to a determination by a subscription to the capital stock in 1848. This had been placed at \$50,000. Hamburg was also desirous of having a bank established there and considerable discussion ensued, but John Loomis, Samuel Whittaker, Charles Cooper and John B. Decker, worked with a method that found supporters for Deckertown rapidly. When the subscription was filled, Hamburg, found that the project was so far favorable to Deckertown's success that they made no farther effort. Jan. 1st, 1850, the Farmer's Bank of Wantage was founded, and began business in part of a private dwelling on Bank St. James C. Haven's was its first president, whose antecedents are mentioned in the notice we have given in this history of Dr. Berret Havens. Thomas D. Armstrong was its first cashier. A few years subsequently the capital stock was increased to \$80,000. At the close of the year 1856 Mr. Armstrong resigned his position as cashier, and John A. Whittaker succeeded him, beginning his

duties Jan. 1st, 1857. James C. Haven resigned as president April 9th, 1857, and Johnathan Whittaker was elected president in his place. In 1873 Johnathan Whittaker died, and on Jan. 13th, 1874, John A. Whittaker became president, which position he still occupies, in the 77th year of his age—one of the oldest and most respected bank presidents living. When he became president in 1874, Theo. F. Margarum became cashier and their careful management has secured the utmost confidence of the public. The stock is not for sale unless the decease of a holder occasionally puts it upon the market when it brings an extra premium. In 1865, at the close of the war and when the National banking system came in vogue, the bank was recapitalized at \$100,000, under that system, and named The Farmer's National Bank of Deckertown. In 1886, when the brick block was built upon the ruins of the great fire which burned all the building on the corner, north of Swartwout and VanGaasbeek's brick block (then Hornbeck's) on the west side of Main St, the bank was removed from Bank St., to its present commodious quarters on the west corner of Main St.

Pulaski Lodge, I. O. O. F., No. 103, was instituted in 1851, and for some ten years flourished but was after that time neglected by its members somewhat. In 1871 it was renewed and has since then been well sustained. This is probably the oldest fraternal organization in the borough, although the Masous are said to have had an organization here previous to 1869. We have no proof of it however. Their Samaritan Lodge No. 93 was formally constituted Feb. 19th, 1869, since which time it has grown to a strong and prosperous branch of this great order.

The K. & L. of G. S., have since the above dates founded a well sustained lodge here, as has the American Legion of honor, the G. A. R., and Sons of Veterans. The Junior Order of United American Mechanics is the last society





organized here, the present year, and it appears also to have a fair prospect ahead of it.

The building of what was called the New York Midland Railroad, gave the greatest boom to Deckertown which it probably ever received, and to which much of its present prosperity may be reasonably ascribed. Surveys had been made for the route ultimately located by this railroad as early as 1832 and 1836. It absorbed part of three routes which had been thus early contemplated. The route was selected and articles of incorporation filed July 13th, 1870. The planning and building of this road was attended with exciting phases. Meetings were held, and immense sums of money subscribed, Wantage giving \$150,000 to the enterprise in stock. John Loomis was a great champion of the road, and made tremendous exertions to secure its location by way of Deckertown. He spared no expense which he thought would have a bearing upon it, and bought liberally of the stock. This is of so recent occurrence that most residents of Wantage remember the arguments put forth to carry through the project. It succeeded and on Aug. 15th, 1873, regular trains first began their trips over the road from New York to Oswego. The road failed to pay interest on its extravagant cost, and at length went into a receiver's hands. The New Jersey Midland R. R., Co., was then organized and ran the road until it also passed in the receiver's hands. Upon a sale of the New Jersey part of the road, it was subsequently purchased by a syndicate and put into operation as the New York Susquehanna & Western R. R. The other, or northern end of the road from Middletown was purchased by a syndicate in which the late Samuel J. Tilden was largely interested. That part has since been run under the name of the Ontario & Western R. R. The building of that N. Y. & O. Midland R. R. drained a large amount of money from Wantage as it did from all places it passed through. It has proved a great benefit to Deckertown but can we say the same of the country round about it? It changed the modes of living, the methods of farming, the fashions and habits of all the surrounding country. Can we say it has made them better or happier? On the contrary there is room for argument. The discrimination of through freights against local freight has really brought the products of western farms into market, and lowered the prices of Sussex county produce. This

in turn has lowered the prices of Sussex County lands. To the borough of Deckertown and all villages along the lines of great railroads the institution of railways has been a blessing. It has caused the population to flock into them, and all through the country you can see the ruins of tenant houses rotting upon farms, and if you inquire where the people have gone they will tell you to Deckertown or Paterson or Newark or some other town or city.

After the building of the Midland, the Sussex Valley route, which had partly been incorporated in the Midland, was brought into notice in connection with a proposed extension of the South Mountain Railroad project from the Delaware to the New Jersey state line near the Walkill, William Bell, of Branchville, lately deceased, secured part of the right of way and the road was commenced. Then it went under until 1891, when as the P. P. & B., it was built. Under its lately organized company and name, the Lehigh & New England R. R. Co., it is soon to complete important links in its line, and start into new life.

At the time Samuel Whittaker was postmaster in Deckertown in 1837, the following were the rates of postage. For any distance not exceeding 30 miles for a single letter, 6 cents. If the letter consisted of two pieces of paper it was called a double letter and charged double. Every additional piece of paper in it was charged 6 cents. Over 30 and not over 80 miles, 10 cents a letter. Over 80 and not over 150 miles, 12½ cents. Over 150 and not over 400 miles, 18½ cents. Over 400 miles 25 cents. Each newspaper carried not over 100 miles, 1 cent. Over 100 miles 1½ cents. Letters and papers were delivered out of the office every day from 8 a. m. to 8 p. m., except on Sundays they were delivered out of offices from 9 to 10 a. m., and from 12:30 to 1:30 p. m. The post office regulations provided that when an "abatement of postage was claimed, the letter must be opened in the presence of the postmaster, or one of his assistants; and if such letter should, instead of being overcharged, happen to be undercharged, the deficiency must be made up by the applicant." From a post office guide in 1835, we learn that there were then 10,750 post offices in the United States. Sometimes an applicant for a letter would claim that too much postage was charged, and after the letter was opened and he saw what it contained, would refuse to pay and let the postmaster keep it.



In 1800 and 1801, a strong effort was made to get Deckertown incorporated as a borough. It was successful and the village became so incorporated Oct. 15, 1801.

(Continued next week)

Correction—William Titsworth, of the Clove, corrects our statement in Chapter ix, that Dr. Beuret Havens came here from Connecticut, which was the tradition given in the family statements. He was with Mr. Havens once on a trip to his native place, and says that the old Haven's burial ground is on a farm at Hog's neck near Sag Harbor on Long Island. This coming within the personal observation of Mr. Titsworth will prove a valuable correction in the interest of history. Hon. Jacob Gould, also corrects the name of a Baptist minister of the First Wantage church, as follows: The name given by us as "Tunis" should read "Twiss," and in the list of M. E. church ministers the name "Seran" should read "Seran". We are glad to have corrections made and hope all who notice positive errors will call our attention to them. Our memoranda gathered from many sources cannot avoid some errors.

Huldah Hayne, who resides in town as mentioned in the concluding part of chap. vii, was a daughter of Lewis Hayne instead of his widow. In conversation with Mr. Lewis H. Decker, the statement made by us last week that Benjamin Decker lived in the stone house which Samuel Decker at one time owned was brought up. The explanation which seems reasonable is that Samuel had perhaps removed to where he had built the hotel and distillery, before Benjamin moved in the stone house.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### LAND OWNERS—THE GRANGE AND THE NEWSPAPERS.

The question of the division of the real estate which Peter Decker settled upon originally, into the many small parcels of land which now compose Deckertown, is one which we cannot follow out in detail. We have delved far enough into the subject however to know that there have been losses in the dealings of various speculators therein. We are satisfied that Peter Decker, who cleared the virgin soil here, and started the wheels of the car of progress, never got the full reward he should have had for his preemption rights. He drove his stakes here and built his home, but there was a great power in New Jersey at that time which swerved Governors and councils as it willed, and it clutched with the hand of capital by purchase and grant from the Crown whole townships, eye counties. It was vested in the Board of Proprietors. By quit claim

and release, they sold large tracts to those who paid the cash. No matter if the cabin of a settler was upon them, and his blazed trees indicated the possessions he had earned and improved. Those purchasers who came from the Board of Proprietors, said to the settler "here is our deed where is yours?" The settler could not but acknowledge in many cases that he could show no title beyond that of possession. That was supposed to amount to something in law, and so purchasers generally allowed the settlers to retain the land upon which their buildings stood, and but little more, sometimes getting their plots surveyed and returned for them in the surveyor general's office, to quiet any legal strife which might threaten as to the balance of their tracts.

It seems to be quite difficult to locate any of the lands originally returned to Peter Decker. Robert Morris Jr. and Gabriel Ludlum were in partnership under the name of Morris & Ludlum, here between 1773 and 1803. They were engaged in the manufacture of potash; and upon the flats south of the Walling creamery the course of an old ditch can be traced which led from their works to the Clove Creek. Robert Morris Jr., was here in 1772, as is attested by the early road survey in that year which began at the corner of his ash house. This would indicate that he then was engaged in manufacturing potash. His residence then was upon Unionville Avenue as it is now called, and upon a tract of 54 66-100 acres which it seems had been conveyed to him by John Rutherford. The latter it appears had previously conveyed to the said Morris 11 3-4 acres which lay within the bounds of the said 54 acre tract, which joined on Decker's Mill lot. In a deed dated April 11, 1793, the foregoing tract is mentioned as being Morris' house lot. This tract therefore embraced the lands from Bank street (now,) over the hill southeastwardly and comprised John McGee's lot and all the hill north of the present school house lot to the 54 acre extent. This having



been returned to John Rutherford by first surveys as we have seen, Peter Decker therefore could never have owned it. This Robert Morris Jr. we conjecture to have been possibly a son of Lewis Morris II, and therefore was slightly related to Mr. Rutherford. We cannot give the date of the continuance of the firm of Morris & Ludlum. In a deed dated May 1st, 1803, one of the lines is mentioned as cornering at a black oak tree which stood on the north side of a ditch "which leads to the potash works late of Morris & Ludlum," thus establishing the fact they were not in business at that date.

In 1790 Joseph Decker sold to Samuel Decker all his lands about Deckertown, consisting of several parcels beginning at a ditch at Decker's spring, and running by the potash works. This serves to establish the identity of the original Decker homestead upon the late Amos Munson property.

Feb. 18, 1813, Peter Decker, who must certainly have been a son of the first Peter, gave a deed to Joseph Sharp to pay off three bonds which then fell due amounting to \$2594, of the lands upon the flats about the potash works, including the land formerly owned by Samuel Decker, and a tract of 31 acres which lay on the road to Frederick Haynes (Louisburg). In that deed it is mentioned that the 31 acres was part of a tract of land originally returned to Richard Penn. Thus showing that the elder Peter Decker had never been its proprietary owner. Peter Decker and Olin, his wife, had previously sold to Samuel Decker a tract of 22 acres lying in or about Deckertown, which is mentioned in the deed as having been originally returned by survey to Richard Penn. Samuel Decker also bought from Andeew Willson a tract lying at the north east of Deckertown, which is mentioned as part of James Barton's original return, and therefore had never been preempted by Peter. Thomas Anderson, of Newton bought 60 acres, Oct. 25th, 1784, being part of 3,000 acres, to

be located in any part of the Eastern Division of New Jersey unappropriated lands except Romopoke. This sixty acres cornered on the lands of Jack Crowell just west of Deckertown. The 3,000 acres was part of the Sharp survey of lands in the Papakating valley, granted to Azariah Dunbar and John Johnson, by the proprietors Sept. 13th, 1754, and recorded in the Surveyor General's office.

Stephen Decker, who resided near or upon what is now Bank St. did not receive any of the lands upon which he resided from his father, but bought them from Joseph Barton, and Elizabeth Coykendall, Executrix, and William Coykendall, and Henry Coykendall, Executors of Gabriel Ludlum, deceased. Stephen left a will. Robert Morris Jr., and Jedediah Sayre bought of Henry Decker 100 acres, in 1791 which adjoined Decker's mill pond. The next year Morris sold his interest to Sayre.

Josias Decker, bought his lands of Joseph Sharp and Martin Ryerson, and afterward conveyed them to Bowdewine Decker.

Abraham Decker, bought his lands of Martin Ryerson, of Newton.

Thus we think it seems to be pretty well established, that capitalists and land speculators, obtained titles by purchase and by filing surveys in the Surveyor General's office, under proprietary grants to all the lands embraced in the present bounds of Deckertown except the Peter Decker homestead, lately that of Amos Munson, and comprising but little more than the few acres immediately about the house.

Samuel Decker seems to have at one time acquired titles to the lands in Deckertown, but expended much money in improvements, being at the close of the Revolutionary war, when the failure of the Continental money made very stringent times, became involved in financial difficulty. William Treadwell, of Amboy, secured a judgment against him for £302-7-6. Under that his property was sold by





James Hynshaw Sheriff in 1793. Gabriel Ludlum was the purchaser; and his deed from the Sheriff is dated Feb. 19th, 1793. May 1st, 1803 Mary, and James Ludlum sold nearly all the tracts to Peter Decker.

About this date Jedediah Sayre came into prominent notice in connection with Deckertown real estate. Whence he came we cannot learn but he must have been a man of considerable means. He is first mentioned in old deeds as from Sussex county. He at one time owned the old mill which once existed upon the lands now of Israel Davenport in Wantage. Feb. 16th, 1801 he bought 50 acres of land from Gertrude Parker, Executrix of John Parker, deceased, buying two chains and ninety links "from John Caskey's old house." March 13th, 1801 he bought ten acres from Thomas Anderson of Newton which began at a pepperidge tree marked on four sides and running "to a corner of Joel Crowl's lands in Wantage." Then he seems to have set out to literally own Deckertown. He bought lots from William Decker for \$725, which had been left to William by his father, Stephen's will. He bought 12 acres from Abraam Coursen for £32. He bought of William Edsall Jr., 72 acres for \$128. He bought of Gertrude Parker, Executrix, 117 acres for \$83 next to Mr. Caskey's. He bought of Robert Morris Jr., all his possessions in Deckertown "between the Clove creek and Drowned lands for \$93 26-100." This survey includes the 100 acres and 11 $\frac{1}{4}$  acres. The 11 $\frac{1}{4}$  acres is however previously recorded as having been sold to him by Robert Morris, Jr., for £450, Nov. 10th, 1792. Mr. Sayre also bought lands of Benjamin Burt, and Peter Smith, Sheriff. Mr. Sayre, it is thought, from a deed hereinafter mentioned lived in a stone house, probably built by Samuel Decker, which stood upon what is now the Loomis farm. He is conjectured by some to have reached Deckertown from Goshen, where reside influential families of the Sayre name.

He died in 1813, leaving what must in those days have been considered a fortune to his five children. They applied to the courts for a partition of his real estate among them.

At the November term of court 1813, John Tims (or Timbs,) George Backster, and Thomas Armstrong, were appointed commissioners in a partition suit to divide the lands of Jedediah Sayre deceased among his children, viz: Susan, who by marriage was a Stoll, Evi A. Sayre, John R. Sayre, James B. Sayre, and Caroline E. Sayre. The last four were then under 21 years of age. Feb. 16th, 1814 the commissioners filed their report. They set off to Susan Stoll a tract of 12 acres, being a part of the great meadows belonging to the stone house (Loomis) farm. This tract was west of the Clove creek near its junction with the Papakating, Caroline having a tract of 6 acres set off to her next to Susan's, on the west banks of the junction of the two creeks. Susan had also the Still house lot set off to her, now owned by J. J. Wickham, except that then it extended across the road and embraced the ground upon which the cider house stood, now part of or just north of the shoe factory lot. The still house and cider house lot then comprised 3 50-100 acres. Susan also had set off to her a tract adjoining John Caskey Sr's., lands containing 90 75-100 acres.

To Evi A. Sayre the commissioners set off a tract of 12 acres, running from the west end of the dam at the foot of now Loomis' hill southerly to a walnut tree, in the stone house (now Loomis) meadow, and from that tree to the centre of the creek in the rear of what is now Benj. H. Smith's property, and thence up the creek to the dam (now Newton Ave.) They also set off to him a lot containing 1 87-100 acres, which probably included what is now F. P. Adams' and Dr. VanGaasbeck's properties. They also set off a tract containing 193 acres, which lay north and northeast of the tavern property, probably extending to





**Abiah Willson's lands.**

To John R. Sayre they set off a part of the stone house farm (now Loomis,) which was the part upon which the buildings were situated as near as can be ascertained. It contained 90 acres. We gather that Jedediah Sayre resided here some part of his lifetime because the survey of the above tract mentions running to a point three links from the "southeast corner of the cow Louse of Jedediah Sayer deceased."

To Mary Sayre they set off the western and southern portion of the stone house farm, running as far south as Susan Stoll's twelve acres near the junction of Clove and Papakating creeks. It contained 57 acres. They also set off to her a lot "on the lower side of the road opposite to the Red house on the hill where Dr. James Hall then lived" containing 1 70-100 acres. This tract we conclude was located in the rear of what is now the Union House. They also set off to her a wood lot of ten acres lying upon the north side of Evi A. Sayre's 192 acre tract, and also northeast of a wood lot of twelve acres which they at the same time set off to Caroline E. Sayer.

To James B. Sayre, they set off a tract containing 1 72-100 acres, upon a part of which we conclude the hotel annex to Goble's is now standing. They also set off to him the Mill farm containing 72 33-100 acres, less a lot previously conveyed to Timothy Holly, leaving net 68 acres. This we conclude to have been the site of Lafayette Fuller's present mill, although there have been suggestions that this was the old mill sight and farm now owned by Israel Davenport in Wantage. They also set off to James B. Sayre a lot of two acres upon which said mill was situated adjoining the above 68 acres, and beginning at a large flat rock on the northwest side of Mill Brook. They also set off to him a lot "bought of Adrian VanHoufen, adjoining lands of Henry Post" containing 17 acres. Also a tract containing 71 39-100

acres, being the farm whereon Thomas Harden lives (1814.) They also set off to him a tract of 24 87-100 acres on the Drowned lands "Beginning at a white oak tree on the west shore of the Wallkill," being premises bought of Joseph Willson.

To Caroline E. Sayre they set off the two lots we have previously mentioned as hers, and also a lot containing 4 92-100 acres, upon which the "red house on the hill where Dr. James Hall lives" (1814,) which we take to have been the lot whereon the Academy building now stands. They also set off a tract to her on the south side of Papakating creek, containing 59 acres, which adjoined George McCoy's, Crowell Adams and John Clay's lands.

The Commissioners certified that the foregoing were all the lands belonging to Jedediah Sayre known to them at that time in Sussex. His daughter, Mary, before mentioned was married after the aforesaid division and was known as Mary Chandler in 1827, as is mentioned in the Sheriff's deed to Bowdewine Decker hereinafter mentioned.

Dr. James Hall who occupied the "little red house on the hill" mentioned in the foregoing surveys, sold it and afterwards bought the double house on the Clove road now owned we think by W. B. Mills. This property he afterwards sold to Rev Leonard Fletcher, who was pastor of the Papakating Baptist church. "The little red house on the hill," probably stood near where V. H. Lane now lives, judging from a map of the above divisions of lands, now in possession of Surveyor James W. McCoy, who kindly loaned it to us. It is mentioned in the survey as being upon lot 9 which we locate as near as possible. Dr. Hall was then a practicing physician here, but it is not known what relationship (if any) he bore to other families of that name in Wantage. How long he remained here is not known, but it is certain that he antedates Dr. Berret Havens in the practice of medicine in



Deckertown.

After the distribution of Jedediah Sayre's estate, his children disposed of their shares to other parties. Mrs. Susan Stoll sold her interests to her brother James B. Sayre, who engaged in the grocery business. The year 1826 and '27 was a noted one in Sussex Co., for litigation. Law suits sprang into existence every day, and the records show that William Darragh, who was then Sheriff, was kept busy by forced sales of personal and real property. A foreclosure was brought upon a lien which swept away a goodly part of Deckertown. The Sheriff levied upon it, and sold the cider house and distillery lots and several other parcels of land. Bowdewine Decker was the purchaser. His deed dated April 9th, 1827, recites of one of the parcels of land "that it lay southeast of the foregoing tracts of land near the road leading to the Babbitt Meeting house near the Pepocotting late in the possession of Samuel Decker and whereon he erected a new frame dwelling house a few years ago." It contained 120 acres. This we take to be the property late of Amos Munson.

Seven or eight years later Samuel Whittaker came in the place, and bought largely of the real estate, as did William Rankin and John Loomis. Then came the late Jacob E. Hornbeck, who at one time was an extensive land holder in the place. With his death the properties have become divided and merged into a greater number of owners.

Benjamin H. Smith has probably expended more money in street improvements than any one man who has ever resided in the place. He took off the top of the hill in front of his house and filled in a considerable hollow at the foot of the hill. Before that the hill was even with his stoop floor, and was a very hard one to haul a heavy load over. The expense of the improvement with the cost of pavements about his property for public use, has been about \$2000.

The stone building now used for a bakery, was built for a blacksmith shop

and used for that purpose in about 1843.

The Wantage Grange, No. 78, P. of H. a farmer's society, was organized about 30 years ago. It suffered a decline for some years, but has been for about seven years in a healthy condition.

The first newspaper of a permanent character was the Independent, the first number of which was issued May 4th, 1870. The next was the WANTAGE RECORDER, the first number of which was issued Jan. 12th 1894.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

WILLIAM RANKIN, A. M.

It is to be desired that some abler pen than ours had attempted this task; but knowing that, however humble the language may be, leading facts are to comprise the substance aimed at we shall proceed to enumerate them. The name of William Rankin has been glorified in all the records of Sussex county which have a bearing upon the educational interests of the county. As the scene of his greatest triumphs was our own borough of Deckertown, it is therefore fitting that we should take perhaps a greater pride in recounting his struggles and ultimate victory than the citizens of other localities. His fame was won by a life struggle for supremacy, at a time when the popular mind valued the acquisition of learning very little. Rev. Peter Kanouse, in his sermon preached at Beemerville Jan. 7th, 1844, speaks thus of the inhabitants of this locality as he viewed them in 1833, the year when Mr. Rankin began his school in Deckertown.

"A race soon appeared, as if the fabled Gorgon teeth had been sowed broad east over the region—a Cycloptic race. Gambling, swearing, lying, cheating, horse-racing, balls, riots, and litigations, followed in their train by a company of duns, constables and sheriffs; and as the fruits of the whole, bankruptcy, broken hearts, disease, suicides, and premature death."

Many common school districts had



scholars who prided themselves upon being able to whip the teacher, and when an incident of that kind happened, instead of visiting condign punishment upon the offenders, the people of the District told of it gleefully and with all the gusto of relating a very proper joke. In such an age William Rankin came to Deckertown, and eventually might truly have quoted the latin axiom, "*Veni Vidi, Vici!*"

He was born amid the beautiful mountains of Greene County, Tennessee in August 1795. It was a year made memorable in the history of that State because it then assumed the organized form of a state from the previous undefined region known as the "Territory south of Ohio." His parents were William Rankin and Sarah Moore. Their respective parents (his grandparents) were Thomas Rankin and Anthony Moore. The two latter were emigrants at the close of the Revolutionary war from the Scotch-Irish settlement at Martin's Creek in Pennsylvania, about six miles above Easton. The Creek is supposed to have taken its name from James Martin, who was one of the Commissioners appointed to lay out the borough of Easton in 1733. David Brainerd the Moravian missionary, speaks of the settlement at Martin's Creek, thus: "May 13th 1744, reached a settlement Irish, and Dutch people, about 12 miles above the forks of the Delaware." Count Zinzendorf in 1742 says: "Following the Indian path that led past Tatemy's house north into the Minisink or upper valley of the Delaware, they came to the village of Clistowakin, five miles above on Martin's creek, near the three churches, in Lower Mt. Bethel." In a note to annals of the Moravian church, the writer speaks of it "Settled by one wing of the Scotch-Irish, who came into this northern part of Buck's county between 1728 and 1730." These Scotch-Irish were Presbyterians. There is a Moore Township now in Northumberland Co., named from the family who settled

there. Mr. Rankin's ancestry however were from Carlisle Pennsylvania, but closely allied to the Moore's in religious feelings and in nativity.

When the disintegration of neighborhoods followed the closing scenes of the Revolutionary war, they drifted away from lower Mt. Bethel and from Carlisle and followed the western slope of the Alleghany mountains to Tennessee. There they pitched their abodes, and it was not long ere a new Mt. Bethel church sprang into existence under their fostering care. William Rankin, Sr., was a wagon master during the Revolutionary war, and was present at Yorktown when Cornwallis surrendered to Washington. William B. Rankin, a brother's son, of Austin, Texas, has a cannon ball which his uncle, the father of William Rankin, Jr., brought home with him from that historical battle-field. Wm. B's father, grandfather, and great grandfather were Elders in that old Mt. Bethel church. Rev. Samuel Dock, D. D., who arose to much distinction as an instructor in Tennessee, emigrated with his ancestors from the same vicinity as the Moore's.—Lower Mt. Bethel church, six miles above Easton, Pa. He first started a school at Mt. Salem in Washington County, Tennessee, and called it Martin's College. This was about 1790. From Martin's College, now Washington College, he moved to Greene County and settled 16 miles from Martin's College near Wm. Rankin, Sr's home. Here he founded Tusculum Academy in 1818 and one of his first scholars was William Rankin of whom we write, at that time 21 to 22 years of age. Young Rankin had previously to that time had little opportunity for acquiring an education. He had worked hard at farm labor. He had suffered a severe attack of scarlet fever which had affected his eyesight and from which it never fully recovered. Yet he appears to have been an apt scholar, and to have made marvelous gains in his studies. Tusculum was then a log structure, which was later



sided over. This became a famed institution of learning, and was incorporated as Tusculum College in 1845, when Andrew Johnson, afterwards President of the United States was made a life trustee. Mt Bethel church founded by the Moores and Rankins stands near this building. It is sixteen mile from Knoxville, Tennessee.

Young Rankin remained there under the instruction of Dr. Doak three years. He then taught school in the neighborhood for a few months. About this time two persons appeared upon the scene who took a great share of his time and thoughts. One was an eccentric man who lived in a lonely hut in the neighborhood, and was known as hermit Jack Robinson. He was embittered against the world, and had lost faith in the teachings of the bible. In his company and in conversation with him the young teacher passed many hours. The other was a young lady named Sally Moore. She was an acquaintance of long standing. In her company he had passed many delightful hours, and they had grown to think each other indispensable to happiness. Their love had become so entwined with all their ideas of present and future life that they may be said to have worshipped at that shrine. But when he broached the subject of marriage to their parents, a stern objection presented itself. They were cousins. No argument could tear down the barrier which strict religious teachings upheld. In this extremity his mind received a lasting shock. He fell into the infidel belief of his friend, the hermit Robinson. It was the turning point of his life. Had he married Sally Moore, the chances are that Sussex County would never have drank at that fountain of instruction he afterwards struck with the rod of a Moses and brought forth here. He had partly consented to become a minister previous to this destruction of his belief in everything. About the middle of the term of school in which he was engaged he disappeared, leaving a note which stated that he was tired of

civilized life. He never came home again. It was years before his parents heard from him again. He was found teaching a school in North Carolina. He had, so it was discovered, been a resident of the Cherokee nation of Indians, and in after life narrated the amusement he created among them by reading from pocket editions of Latin and Greek, of Horace and Homer which he carried with him. His father endeavored to induce him to return home, but in vain. His mind was too restless from the great disappointment he had undergone to remain long in a place. He taught terms of school in Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia. Like a wounded bird he flitted from place to place in a state of unrest and seemed to find no permanent abode. In 1828 he made his appearance in Johnsonburg, now in Warren County, and applied for the school. He was travel stained, and carried a small budget. Dr. Roderick Byington appointed a day to examine him as to his qualifications. On that occasion a considerable number of the people of the neighborhood assembled at the village tavern where the examination was held. The writer having once been subjected to a similar examination, can fully realize the display intended. The examiner on such occasions delighted to show by his learned questions his superiority in scholastic attainments, and the examined was equally desirous of showing the audience that he was a match for his questioner, while the villagers were ready to applaud the discomfiture of either one. Despite Mr. Rankin's rough appearance he surprised the Dr. by his knowledge of Latin, Greek, and the various studies upon which he was examined, and their hearers went away enthusiastic in praise of the new school master.

Shortly after beginning the school he was taken ill and for some weeks was under a physicians care. He gave up the school. After he recovered sufficiently to walk he went to Newton where he was welcomed by Rev. Jos.





Shaffer. He then secured a position as assistant teacher to Rev. Edward Allen, who opened a select school that fall (1828) in his house in the Clove near Deckertown. Here he taught one term. One of his scholars during this term was E. A. Styles, who afterward founded Mt. Retirement Seminary. At the expiration of the term Mr. Rankin engaged with Rev. Clarkson Dunn, of Newton, and taught a short time in a building on the hill, which was afterwards used as a residence by the late Levi Shepherd. From here he went one year to Yale college where the degree of A. M. was conferred upon him. In 1830, with Rev. Edward Allen, he founded a select school at Harmony Vale near Hamburg, which was liberally patronized. In the fall of 1833 he sought to establish a school in Deckertown, but found it difficult to secure a suitable room. Finally to use his own words: "I rented from the tavern keeper before mentioned, a small building which was situated about half way up a steep hill." His first pupil, John A. Whittaker, Esq., informs us that as near as he can recollect this building stood in the rear of Mr. Mecker's present property. Mr. Rankin's further description of the building was as follows: "This building had been erected for a tailor shop and used for that purpose, until the proprietor changed his mind and went to tavern keeping. It had never been painted, and had stood long enough to turn black, or at least blackish. Access to the door was by steps, or rather stairs on the lower side. After examining all within I descended the steps and attempted to regain the main street, which I did by two or three damaging slides for the ground was covered with ice." From this we may reasonably infer that it was not earlier than November when he began his school. The room was 14 feet square and bare of furniture. After borrowing a pick and digging a few rough places about the steps to make the ascent practicable to his room, he next set about getting a stove. He

enquired of the merchants for a stove but they informed him none was to be had nearer than Newton or Goshen. He then says "I made the same inquiry of the tavern keeper and at first he made the same reply, but then looking for a moment downward he raised his head and striking the counter as was his manner, said 'I will rent you a stove but it is a broken one. A few nights ago the young fellows in my bar room got tight and in a row broke my stove badly.' I will take it," said I "what is your price?" "I will charge you nothing for the use of it if you will get it repaired." Have you a smith's shop in the place? "None nearer than a mile and a half." Have you anything by which I can convey the stove thither? "I can lend you a horse, but I have neither a sleigh, sled or wagon that would answer for such a purpose." Have you a wood pile? "Do you mean to hitch my horse to a wood pile and drag it to the smith's shop with the stove on top?" If I injure your horse in the least, I answered, I will indemnify you for the same. He laughed and said 'go ahead.' While he went for the horse I went to the woodpile, and selected a couple of poles eight feet long and, having obtained a hammer and nails, nailed on several cross pieces, and putting the horse in these shafts, I loaded up the broken stove and moved off to the blacksmith shop. The repairing having been accomplished, I returned and put my stove in the place prepared for it. Having now furnished my room with warming apparatus and a few rude seats, I advertised on the public doors of the village that my school would open on the ensuing Monday morning. I had not a single scholar engaged certainly, though all told me they would see about it, and, if I succeeded would most likely send."

When he went to open the school, he said; "ascending the steps, I entered the door, and was there not a single scholar there? Yes, there sat a single one—a young man of of fifteen or sixteen. He arose and handed me a note from his



father (Samuel Whittaker) a respected and worthy gentleman of Orange County (Unionville) N. Y. In this note he said he had heard of my intention to open the school and wished to enter his son at the beginning." This young man was then fifteen years of age, and is the President of the Farmers' National Bank, John A. Whittaker. Mr. Whittaker informs us that the next scholars to appear at the school were Dr. Allen's two daughters, Lydia and Anna. The building in which Mr. Rankin thus began his famous school, is said by more than one old inhabitant of the place to have been subsequently removed to Mill street and to be now part of the dwelling house owned and occupied by William Mann. Mr. Whittaker says he cannot remember as to the disposition made of the building.

Before the next spring over twenty scholars were in attendance. The next year this number was doubled. And as the fame of his school was spread scholars came from distant places, and the number increased. It is thought that he occupied the building that he first rented for the school room two years, but it may have been three. In 1837 the deed of the old church on the hill which was sold him recites that the deed was a duplicate given him by the trustees of the Presbyterian church in place of one give him previously for said premises but which had been lost. If the lost deed was given the year before, it made his stay in the first school room three years. It is not likely he remained there longer, very possibly not so long because the room could not have accommodated much more than twenty scholars. He purchased the old church and converted it into an academy very certainly by 1836. It was well suited for his purpose. Here he was obliged to engage assistant teachers and among those engaged was Miss Lydia Ballard, an accomplished young lady from Nashua, N. H. Later he formed an attachment for her which was reciprocated and they were married. She made him a de-

voted wife, and the pupils male and female who attended her instructions never forgot her kindness towards them, nor her unwearied efforts to enhance their progress in the varied studies they were engaged in.

From 1836, we will say, to 1842, he attained the greatest reputation in his profession. The female department of the academy was presided over by his estimable wife, and the number of pupils taxed the capacity of the building to its fullest extent. In 1842 he sold the academy to the Deckertown school district (No. 42 of Wantage Township,) and removed to Amity. The closing of the school in Deckertown grew out of a difficulty affecting the property. He remained in Amity two years. He then sought to return to Deckertown, but a suitable property for his purpose was difficult to find. He accordingly took the property where James H. Dunning now lives, and opened a female department of his school which he placed in charge of his wife. He then opened the male department of the school in Unionville. This arrangement lasted two years, but although well patronized was found inconvenient. He then gave up his labors there and came to Deckertown, whence he removed to Chester, N. J., a few years later. He remained there but a short time. Then he established his school at Mendham, N. J., and continued teaching there until his death, which occurred in the spring of 1876. For fifteen years previous to that event he was blind. Yet he continued his school and his reputation as a teacher flagged not. His death occurred while he was instructing a class in Zephon's Anabasis. Without premonitory symptoms of illness he suddenly fell dead before his horrified pupils, from an attack of apoplexy. His funeral and interment took place at Mendham. Thus closed the career of the greatest professional teacher known in Sussex County. He came to Wantage when education, like the county, was in a wild and unsettled state, and he



brought out of that wilderness as one might say, a grand structure, which will endure for ages yet to come—a monument to his great talent. Then, as now, most male teachers simply took hold of school teaching as a preparatory course for some other profession. They can hardly be classified as professional teachers. William Rankin was a professional teacher in the fullest sense of the term—he attained the highest rank in that profession—and he died like a soldier in battle in the noble discharge of his duty. Out of the shadows which obscured his early life, and we are assured by his nephew that skepticism in bible matters did not leave him until he settled in Deckertown, he emerged by patient and persevering efforts into the sunlight of popular favor and renown. These efforts were of no ordinary character. They were guided by a master intellect, and aided by superb physical powers. He was, says one of his students, something over six feet high, square shouldered, well proportioned and able to take refractory young men by the neck with one hand and lift them clear of the floor and shake them as a terrier would a rat. His face had high cheek bones, was smooth shaven, always by himself, and his eyes possessed a peculiar look as though they were weak, arising from an attack of fever in early life. His one peculiar faculty of teaching, says Rev. Wm. B. Rankin his nephew, now of Austin, Texas, was, that he not only impressed but imparted. His learning was imparted to pupils. They were not only impressed by his presence, but his words were remembered by them. One expression often used by him was "chinking in." A prison, he would illustrate, may build a high wall but it has got to be chinked in to render it durable. So in learning great principles you must not forget the chinking in, i. e., details. His eccentricity was noted. Sometimes said his nephew, who assisted him for a time, in the middle of the night he would arouse me. "William," said he

got up, ring the academy bell; ring it long and loud. Tell the boys I want them to read to me." When they were assembled they read a Greek lesson perhaps, and he would comment on it. Then he would say "now go back to bed boys."

These were passing shadows of the old sorrow of his life, perhaps, which required heroic measures to eclipse. On one occasion a young man named Talmage attended his school and studied Greek. When declining Greek nouns, after the pronunciation of Mr. Rankin, he fell into the habit of pronouncing the prefix "Toop," "Tupp." Mr. Rankin corrected him in a number of lessons, yet whenever the subject came up in succeeding lessons the pupil would forget and to his teachers "Toop" respond "Tupp." One morning it again came up, and to Mr. Rankin's "Toop" again came up the "Tupp" of young Talmage. Rankin turned upon him like an enraged lion, and grasping him by the collar with one hand, he raised the other as if about to strike, and shouted "If you say Tupp again I will knock your teeth down your throat." The prefix was tacked to Talmage's name after that, by the students and he ever afterwards was known as Tupp Talmage.

No other school in Sussex County has turned out so many men who became prominent in after life as teachers, surveyors, ministers, and prominent men in all walks of life, as Rankin's. Mrs. Lydia Rankin is still living in Sumner, State of Washington. They had two children, both girls, born to them, Sarah and Uretta. The former died in youth, the latter married Rev. Mr. Davenport, a Presbyterian minister now in Sumner, Washington, with whom Mrs. Rankin is living. Here we will bring our sketch of his life to a close. His was a noble life. From adversity it wrought triumph. It stands out upon the page of history, a marvel of untiring labor and professional devotion crowned by success. We cannot know the sorrows he lived down, but we do know



that he buried them in the labor which has benefitted generations of his fellow men. "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war." Of such were his victories; over all, the hero who sleeps beneath the modest monument at Mendham.

(Conclusion)

**SUPPLEMENT.** The lands and interests once owned and exchanged by Mr. Rankin in Deckertown which appear from records, have been summarized for us by James W. McCoy, Esq., verified from surveys he has made, incidentally while in the practice of his profession as a surveyor in the place. He was a pupil of Mr. Rankin's and our thanks are due to him for valuable data in the preparation of this article. The first real estate owned by Mr. Rankin appears to have been embodied in a deed dated June 1835, which included 5 1/2 acres, which surrounded the meeting house (Academy lot), and was conveyed to him by James Evans and wife for \$2,400 who claimed title by purchase from Alex. Boyles and wife. It is probable that Mr. Rankin about the same time had a deed of the meeting house lot, which was the one mentioned as lost and for which he received a duplicate April 6th, 1837 for \$175 from the trustees of the First Presbyterian church in Wantage. Therein the lot is described as containing 57-100 acres, and covered a strip one rod wide on four sides of and outside of the old church building and the ground upon which it stood. The trustees mentioned their title as having been purchased from James H. Sayre. By deed of May 14th, 1841, Wm. Rankin and wife conveyed the premises (North part of Academy lot) to Stephen J. Cole; and the latter's heirs, April 6th, 1857 conveyed it to the school trustees.

Mr. Rankin purchased of Bowdewine Decker for \$500, April 1st, 1837, 2 3/4 100 acres, which began at a post in a board fence at a corner of Samuel Whittaker's lot standing north 76 deg. 20. east 4 chains and 10 links from the north corner of the old tavern house. Mr. Rankin and wife by deed May 1st 1851 conveyed to Bethuel Farrand a part of this tract which is part where James H. Dunning now resides. A part of this tract also comprised the premises where John A. Whittaker now resides. While another part conveyed to the trustees of the Third Presbyterian church of Wantage by Mr. Rankin and wife June 11th, 1839 for \$1 is the lot where the Presbyterian church now stands.

May 15th, 1841, for \$100, Wm. Rankin and wife conveyed to Henry Shepherd, et. al., a lot on Academy hill for the site for a new academy, which however was never built.

In the deed of Mr. Rankin to Bethuel Farrand above cited one of the lines cornered on the lands of Edwin Young. The greater of this Edwin Young lot is now owned by Peter Wells.

The last lot conveyed by Mr. Rankin of his

Deckertown real estate was deeded by himself and wife to John L. Decker Feb. 10th, 1860 for \$100. It lies on Academy hill contiguous to the school lot, and is recited in the survey to be north of the same. This is the premises now owned by Mrs. Ayres, and was purchased by John D. Simmons from the heirs of John B. Decker about six years since. A lot was purchased of said Decker's heirs at the same time by the Trustees of the school district for school purposes which lay adjoining the Academy lot on the south or southwest. With the sale of his lot to John B. Decker, Mr. Rankin concluded forever his dealings in a commercial way with the people of Deckertown. His influence has hung over the place for its good however for a generation in all that concerns the education of its people. Well has he been termed "The great Educator of Sussex."

**ADDENDA.** Miss M. M. Lawrence of Hamburg whose historical writings have attracted much attention, supplies us with the following facts which are of great value as hitherto unpublished Sussex County records. The Robert Morris, Jr., mentioned in Chapter viii of your interesting history of Deckertown was a son of Richard Morris and Sarah Lullow, grandson of Lewis Morris second and Catherine Stants. He married Frances Ludlum sister of his partner Gabriel Ludlum, and the late Judge Richard R. Morris of Sparta was his eldest son. James Ludlum a brother of Gabriel, purchased a tract of land in the county at the head of the Walkill, now Sparta leaving part of it to his nephew R. R. Morris who settled there.

Sparrowbush, N. Y., Sept. 9th, 1855.

ENTIRE RECORDS:

In the History of Deckertown mention is made of Yope, son of Peter Decker. Probably you are aware that Yope and the Joseph that sold the lands in 1790, was one and the same person. You will remember that my grandfather's name was Joseph and was a son of Hannah Decker Cole, and undoubtedly named for this Joseph Decker, her brother (my grandfather) was always called Yope, which is the Dutch of Joseph.

MRS. L. C. BUOSS.

## Twenty-eight in Twenty Minutes.

The following letter from Rev. Leonard Fletcher, who was pastor of the First Baptist church of Wantage from 1825 for about seven years, is valuable in connection with our history of Deckertown. There is a quaint humor about the good man's attempt to beat the record on baptism against time, but it must have been rough on the candidates:





For the COLUMBIAN STAR & INDEX.

Dackertown, N. J., Jan. 24th, 1830.

BROTHER EDITOR.—Knowing that it ever delights the hearts of the children of God to hear of the triumphs of grace in the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. I am induced once more to write you, and communicate to the friends of Zion, through the medium of the Star and Index, the progress of the work of grace in the vicinity since the date of my last. About that time (Dec. 18th,) the attention of the public was generally excited and our congregations were incredibly large. Since then however, the excitement has considerably abated, but the work continues gradually to progress.

On the first day of this month I baptised twenty-eight persons in just twenty minutes, thus demonstrating the truth of the proposition that twelve administrators can immerse three thousand candidates in less than three hours. I have baptised 105 since the work commenced, and am yet in hopes of considerably enlarging the number. The revival has not been confined to any congregation, nor to the Baptist, but other churches and other denominations

have shared largely in the trophies of redeeming grace.

It would be impossible to state the exact number of those who have been born into the kingdom since the work commenced but in the judgment of charity, there are not less than seven or eight hundred who have been made partakers of a good hope through grace, within the circumference of a few miles since the first of October last. Several Universalists have let go their hold on nothing, and have laid hold of the hope set before them in the gospel and have abandoned the broad platform of universal salvation, and have taken refuge in the ark of safety.

In conclusion, I cannot forbear to observe, that previous to the commencement of the present gracious work, there was a peculiar anxiety on the minds of Christians for the prosperity of Zion, and the salvation of sinners. And in all the ardor of holy desire, they went to the throne of grace, and the Lord who is rich in mercy and plentiful in redemption deferred, not to answer and bless.

Yours in Love.

LEONARD FLETCHER,

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